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THE PLACE OF HISTORICAL FICTION AND STORY-TELLING
IN PRIMARY EDUCATION, 1880 - 1980

Sarah Grace Bell .

A thesis presented for the degree of M.A. (Ed.)
in the Faculty of Social Science.

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ABSTRACT

A century of change in the content of history teaching is traced, first in the elementary schools of England and Wales before World War II, then in the new creations of Primary Schools as the 1944 Education Act was implemented. Relatively rigid requirements of codes and regulations are seen to determine the content of the early period, whilst suggestions and guidance characterize the second, bringing new methods and approaches to the subject.

The significance and value of stories in the learning process is investigated, and extended to the teaching of history exploring relevant themes.

As case-studies, the short historical stories in three of the several books written by Eileen and Rhoda Power are critically analysed for their place, value and significance with comparative evidence from teachers and children.

The conclusion reached is that stories are worthy of inclusion in the primary curriculum and that historical fiction in its own right deserves to be read because it makes a statement about life. Through fictional literature it is possible to enrich and extend personal experiences by empathetic understanding of the past.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND BRIEF REFERENCES

The place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.

- BATHO : G.R.Batho, 'Sources for the History of History Teaching in Elementary Schools 1833-1914' in Local Studies and the History of Education. (Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1972).
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- G.Trease : G.Trease, Tales out of School, (Heinemann, 1964).

GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS

Board of Ed.	:	The Board of Education
Children's Lit. in Ed.	:	<u>Children's Literature in Education</u>
D.E.S.	:	Department of Education and Science.
H.A.	:	The Historical Association
H.M.S.O.	:	His Majesty's Stationery Office Her Majesty's Stationery Office
Min. of Ed.	:	The Ministry of Education.
S.R.E.B.	:	Southern Regional Examinations Board.

CHAPTER 1THE CHANGING CONTENT OF HISTORY AS TAUGHT IN THE
ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMa) 1880-1940

The opportunity for the teaching of history in elementary schools in the last three decades of the nineteenth century was limited by legislation. By implementing grants which were conditional on passing examinations in the 3Rs, the Revised Code of 1862 had depressed the development of all other subjects, among them, history. This led to a mechanical method of teaching, with rote learning, and in a letter from Sir Robert Lowe to R.R.W. Lingen (Kay-Shuttleworth's successor as Secretary to the Committee in Council) he gives the reason for this; that results were measurable in the 3Rs...

'Had there been any other branch of useful knowledge, the possession of which could have been ascertained with equal precision, there was nothing to prevent its admission. But there was not....' (1)

History therefore was not measurable, 'useful knowledge' and,

'...It would seem that the introduction of the Revised Code had led to the virtual exclusion of history from the timetable, if not always from the teaching of schools under inspection'.(2)

Between 1862 and 1867 very little history was taught,

1) A.Patchett Martin, Life & Letters of the Right Honourable Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrook, 1893, Vol.II, p.217.

2) Batho, p.138.



except in the 'stories' in class readers.

Even though there were amendments in 1867 to include history in specific subject grants, Matthew Arnold, H.M.I., reported that this had little immediate effect:

'Language, Geography and History which stimulate and interest have fallen into disuse. The Minute of February restoring them as grant earning has recalled them, but the grant is too trifling and too many conditions are attached". (1)

Throughout the period 1862-1895 the curriculum of the elementary schools was largely shaped and determined by grant-earning considerations, and 'until 1890 the teaching of history was not encouraged, although the degree to which it was discouraged varied from one period to another'. (2)

It was the Code of Regulations, 1871 - the 'New Code' that began the trend towards a more liberal curriculum. The Code listed the specific subjects eligible for a grant of three shillings per subject to include, geography, history, grammar, algebra, geometry, natural philosophy, physical geography, the natural sciences, political economy, language, or any definite subject of instruction. However, these subject grants were limited to two per school, and were to be extended over the classes to be examined in Standards IV, V and VI. This was a relatively minor concession, since the grant was only three-quarters of that for a pass in one

1) Marvin (ed). - Matthew Arnold's Reports, HMSO, (1908), p.114

2) Batho - p.139.

of the 3Rs'. This system of 'specific subjects' lasted until 1875 when 'class subjects' were introduced. In order to obtain a grant for 'class subjects', these had to be taught to all the children in the school above Standard I.

Four shillings per head was awarded for a 'good' pass in any two class subjects, and two shillings per head for a 'fair' pass. At the same time, grants for 'specific' subjects increased to four shillings per head, while in the 3Rs the grants decreased to three shillings from four shillings. However, the new code removed history from those subjects examined individually, and made it a 'class' subject. Soon the first history syllabus was introduced. Thus, history teaching in schools was not profitable grantwise, and therefore did not increase. By 1875, the 'number taking history had risen to 17,710, but the increased popularity of English literature reduced the subject's ranking in popularity among the 'specific' subjects to fourth.' (1)

Further developments came into being in 1880 when a grant was paid for subjects taught throughout the year in reading lessons. This meant the overuse of reading manuals and cramming books. History was therefore, not so much taught, as read; and as such, was criticised by the Inspectorate.

The 1882 Code ruled that if any 'class' subjects were taken, one had to be English, and so this restricted the teaching of history to Standard V and above.

1) Batho - p.139.

'By 1890, out of 22,516 departments for older children, English was taught in 20,304 and Geography in 12,367, but History was to be found in only 414'.⁽¹⁾ The publication of the Report of the Cross Commission, 1888, was one of the turning points for history in the elementary school.

'...The Cross Commissioners held that the restriction of history to Standard V and upwards had greatly discouraged its systematic teaching and that a syllabus of instruction in the subject should be inserted in the Code. The Code of 1890 carried out these suggestions and removed the rule making English compulsory if any class subject were taken. By 1895, the number of schools taking history rose to 3,597.' (2)

1895 saw the official ending of the system of 'Payment by Results'. Object lessons now included those on history, which was made compulsory for Standards I, II and III and after the passing of the Day School Code, 1895, grants were issued for 'class subjects' and history was specified. This grant payment was continued until 1900 when it was replaced by a block grant system (issued by the new Board of Education established in 1899) with history included among the subjects taken 'as a rule', in all schools.

The actual content of history being taught in the lower standards included a general outline of English History which the Cross Commissioners had recommended, while in the upper Standards, some time should be spent

1) Batho - p.139

2) Batho - p.140

in acquiring a knowledge of some part of the English Constitution and some of the national institutions. It was now thought necessary that more should be taught, and expected, than the memorization of dates and sovereigns, all of which were laboriously learned, and that the Board's Codes should provide a history syllabus for those who needed guidance.

The Commission of Council issued suggestions for a history syllabus for all classes of Elementary schools, although alternative schemes were acceptable for approval. Standards I and II consisted of simple stories, progressing in Standard III to twelve stories from early History, for example the Ancient Britons, the coming of Christianity, Alfred, Canute, Harold and the Battle of Hastings. In Standard IV the period 1066 - 1485 was covered by means of twenty stories and biographies, for example, Hereward, Becket, Richard I, John and Magna Carta, de Montfort and Parliament, the Black Prince and Caxton. Standard V continued the chronological order with the use of biographies on Somerset, Elizabeth I, Shakespeare, Raleigh, Cecil, Drake and Mary, Queen of Scots. Standard VI covered the Civil War, and the Constitution and Functions of Parliament, while Standard VII progressed on to the Hanoverian period and included the acquisition of the colonies.⁽¹⁾

In general this course put emphasis on the lives of leading persons - politicians, sovereigns, soldiers, writers and inventors, with the curriculum for the top

1) E.W.Holwell, *Some Principles and Practices in Teaching History, 1700-1900*, (Hull, 1959), p.290

two Standards being less 'person centred' and including more general historical movements and institutions; the teaching in the Seventh Standard was to include work on writers and statesmen. However, it was suggested that in each year, the biographies of six eminent persons were to be read. This first officially-suggested syllabus was added to the previously given instructions. New ideas promoted a study of local history and colonial and foreign possessions, in an attempt to cover the whole of English History, which seemed to be of prime importance. In 1897 the Commissioners also suggested joint schemes for History and English, as well as those previously suggested - for History and Geography in 1895.

Thus, History remained as a chronologically developed theme of Britain, largely imparted by reading or listening to history stories. However, the most up-to-date teaching at the time was seen in Victoria's Diamond Jubilee when teachers taught contemporary history based on The Royal Biography - The Queen's Resolve: "I will be good" and her "doubly Royal" Reign by Rev. Charles Bullock (1897). The use of biographies and improved printing techniques began to lead to a wider range of books being available, which in turn gave rise to a general improvement of quality in History teaching. It was at this time, that the further use of displays, antiquities, plans, maps, pictures, lantern slides, loan collections, school visits etc. were encouraged alongside the traditional, oral and reading History lessons.

The content of history being taught in the classrooms was influenced by what teacher trainees covered at

college, but the standard was improving, even if the content was still fairly limited to that of the history of England based on stories and personalities, especially for the lower Standards. From 1870 to 1902, English Elementary Education had been practical rather than theoretical - aiming to get as many school places as possible, and to ensure these were filled. More schools meant more teachers, and the pressure on teacher-training laid emphasis on teaching method. Psychological and philosophical issues were often overlooked as student teachers were filled with information and a convenient four or five steps for setting out a lesson.

History teaching therefore was affected by the type of training student teachers received, which varied depending on whether they were male or female. For first year men the general outlines of British History were studied, and this continued into the second year to cover special periods in greater detail, mainly from the death of Elizabeth I to 1815. Female students learnt the elementary facts and general outline and progress of the country to 1485, and continued up to the present time in their second year. However, this was not necessarily well taught, and was mainly seen as a method of gaining information. Later developments extended the period of study to more recent events. However, the teaching of local and World History was almost non-existent, with emphasis placed on rote-learning of a skeleton outline of events and dates.

The class readers in use were sometimes the only way in which pupils received their history teaching.

Many of these interspersed fact with fiction, but this was because they were primarily readers, and not necessarily purveyors of historical information - in fact subject matter was often neglected. What was needed was a method of 'real teaching' which brought the subject 'to life', including the use of pictures, maps etc. which could appeal to the child's imagination and hopefully, raise interest in the subject.

One celebrated source of information as to how some children were taught history, is the famous Little Arthur's History of England by Lady Callcott (pub.1835, and used throughout the century) which consisted of the story of British heritage told in terms of 'heroes' and 'tyrants', portraying an exciting, heroic time, although heavily biased. In fact the main aim of this book and of history in general at the time, was to teach morality and greatness. It was thought that children ought to know their rights and duties, with British heritage being compared with other nations. As Joan Blyth has stated 'History was to be studied for the virtues it might develop, not for enjoyment or interest and certainly not for essential, practical reasons.'⁽¹⁾

But new ideas were beginning to circulate among the early 20th century theorists, and called 'the New Education'⁽²⁾. Released from the shackles of 'Payment

1) J.E.Blyth, History in Primary Schools, (McGraw-Hill,1982),p.5.

2) R.J.W. Selleck, The New Education, Pitman, 1968.

by Results', more attention was being paid to the writings of Herbart & Froebel (Germany), Sloyd and Linz (Scandinavia) and John Dewey (U.S.A.) who sought a more enlightened approach to teaching and an investigation into how children learn rather than what was to be poured into them. Edmond Holmes, Sir Percy Nunn, Charlotte Mason and Susan Isaacs took up the challenge, yet the Boards continued to give suggestions on content only.

History as a suitable subject for elementary teaching was given official recognition in the Codes in 1902 and 1904 and with the publication of the handbook Suggestions for Consideration of Teachers and others, of 1905 . Further regulations and suggestions were published by the Board of Education in 1912, The Code of Regulations for Public Elementary Schools in England (HMSO), followed by the Suggestions for the Teaching of History (Circular 833, HMSO 1914, + 1927 version). The latter stated that junior aged children would best learn history by hearing stories, so in 60 years little had changed in presentation. However, there was no guidance on what these stories might be. Textbooks for elementary schools consisted of aspects of life of early men and Ancient Britain in particular, for example The Industrial and Social History Series (Geo. G. Harrap and Co.Ltd., 1902 - a series of six books).

Yet the theorists were making some impression, for:

'...About the turn of the century, both in elementary and in secondary education, subject matter and approach were changing in emphasis if not in fundamental character. In elementary schools the history-reader, or the history catechism, were yielding place to something more analogous to the contemporary

text-book,...and to some extent in elementary schools too, a variety of reading outside the text was being introduced. At the same time as the range of the subject matter was widening to include other streams in the national evolution than the purely biographical and political one, the study of "trends" and "developments", constitutional, economic and social, were tending to replace the doings of "good", "bad" and "weak" kings.' (1)

But in practice the teaching of history within the curriculum between the Education Acts of 1902 and 1944, did reflect a concentration upon a rather chronologically organised insular syllabus. In particular, stress was laid upon political and constitutional aspects. The new concept of 'movements' and 'trends' was encouraged in order to :

'foster a realization of the past as an essential prelude to the present. Thus it was urged that the pupil should be led to a greater awareness of the national society in which he lived and how it had developed to its present stage'. (2)

However, pressure for changing the traditional content of history lessons was slowly being exerted, as a result of an apparent growing awareness that younger and less able children, in particular, were interested in themselves and their immediate environment and surroundings. This led to more personal, social and economic elements, and local history. In fact, the study of local history was included in Suggestions for Consideration of Teachers and Others, (1905), stating, 'with regard to local

1) Min. of Ed., Teaching History (HMSO, 1952), p.9

2) Tom Cook, The Teaching of Local History in Schools since 1902, History of Ed.Soc.Bulletin, No.17, Spring 1976, (History of Ed.Soc.Leicester,1976), p.45.

history we are strongly of the opinion that it should belong in all the stages of historical thinking since the locality is one of the child's first interests.'⁽¹⁾ This was extended to the study of the history of the town or district in which schools were situated.

This change in the approach to teaching in the elementary school is evident in the writings of Edmond Holmes (an ex-C.I.) in his book What is, and What Might Be (1911) - a two-part book indicating the attitudes prevailing in elementary schools, and looking forward to a more enlightened approach to teaching. In the 'What is' section he criticises current teaching methods which aim:

'...to feed him (the child) with semi-digested food...to lay thin veneers of information on the surface of his mind... The result is that the various vital faculties which education was supposed to train, become irretrievably starved and stunted in the over-educated school child.'⁽²⁾

The bombardment with information, even in story form, stifles initiative and leads to boredom. Holmes' Utopian School at Sompting in Sussex, is described in the What Might Be half of his book where skills and concepts of self-reliance, trust, initiative, and thinking and solving problems are common-place. He contrasts the two approaches to teaching and cites two things which will strike a stranger entering the "Utopian" classroom.

1) Board of Ed., Suggestions for Consideration of Teachers and Others, (H.M.S.O. 1905) p.45.

2) E.G.A. Holmes, What is and What Might Be, (Constable, 1911), p.4.

'One is the ceaseless activity of the children. the other is the bright and happy look on every face. In too many elementary schools the children are engaged either in laboriously doing nothing - in listening, for example, with ill-concealed yawns, to lectures on history , geography, nature-study and the rest;... (1)

The remedy would lie in the method advocated by H.Caldwell Cook in 1917, who refers to the 'teachers' unthinking compliance with a rotten tradition' (2) and with reference to history makes the 'revolutionary' observation:

'The individual child cannot try over again for himself all the experience of the ages, and therefore he must study the record of the past. But this study, to have any value, must persuade the child to live over again, briefly in his imagination, the ages gone by, and my simple contention is that the child be allowed to express his imaginings in the manner that most appeals to him, the way that is most natural. This will be the Play Way, with the high thoughts and noble endeavour of that super-reality which is make-believe'. (3)

What was needed was scope for internalising information and using it in imaginative role-play and drama. Sir Percy Nunn in Education, its data and First Principles (1918) looked for a new social framework, and freedom for individual development. These ideas were put forward by the New Education Fellowship (formed in 1921) yet a Report on the Teaching of History (Board of

1) E.G.A. Holmes, op.cit., p.154.

2) H.Caldwell Cook, The PlayWay (Heinemann,1917), p.11.

3) H.Caldwell Cook, Ibid, p.11.

Education, 1923) stated that what was needed was the first consecutive outline of outstanding figures and events, at least of our own national story - not much evidence of progress in 60 years! However, evidence was found of an increase in the teaching and attention placed on social history, with text-books such as J.R. Green's Short History of the English People in use.

This consisted of 'an account of the developing life of the whole people, and not merely of the greater figures which led or dominated the evolution from time to time.'⁽¹⁾

Historical studies were also often found to have links with the Bible, but over all, they concluded that in primary years the course followed should be one of general stories drawn from all countries although, the 'primary object of our main course must be to give the pupils a clear outline of the history of their own country,'⁽²⁾ with care taken to gain the necessary foundations of simple facts and dates, needed for the seniors to assume and build upon in later forms.

The imparting of factual knowledge through stories therefore, still had prime importance. Regarding historical novels, the report stated that:

'it cannot be said that their use is as wide or as intelligent as it might be. One rarely heard during a lesson any reference to the pupils' reading of an historical novel, and more stress should certainly be laid in such lists on the really first-rate books which everyone should read.'⁽³⁾

1) Board of Ed., The Teaching of History, No.37 (HMSO,1923),p.22

2) Board of Ed., Ibid ., p.22.

3) Board of Ed., Ibid ., p.41.

The Report recommended the reading of the good history story books (that were being published) as a means of children knowing 'our own national story' and gave an 'alphabet' of thirty-two dates, events in English history which all children should learn. These ranged from 100 B.C. to the 1914-18 wars. History teaching was still essentially content and fact-based.

In 1927, the Board of Education set out to report on the teaching of History in London Elementary schools. The purpose of this report was to find out the position of History teaching at the time, and what a child was expected to know at the end of his/her elementary schooling. A sample number of schools were involved, with inferences drawn from the tests carried out. It was concluded that

'the average elementary school child in London has acquired some sense of time sequence, though it cannot, of course be considered satisfactory that only 88 children out of 1,305 can assign with accuracy these names to each of four consecutive centuries in British History.' (1)

Perhaps this proves that giving factual information was not enough, and that more attention should be given to how children learn. The general standard of written expression was criticised, which in turn was a serious reflection upon the teaching of English, as well as upon the teaching of History. It was emphasized again that history was concerned 'too exclusively with the story of Britain and the British Empire.' (2)

1) Board of Ed., General Report on the Teaching of History in London Elementary Schools (HMSO, 1927) p.5.

2) Board of Ed., Ibid., p.7.

The League of Nations Union, commenting on history teaching in England, put forward their own recommendations, as they tried to bring the teaching of history to more schools, and especially for children in the elementary sector. For children under 12, they recommended 'human stories' as the best methods of propagating the ideals of the League's own aims with 'more specific' teaching being introduced after that age. In 1927, after a conference of 600 representatives of Local Education Authorities at Westminster under the President of the Board of Education (Lord Eustace Percy), the League published a joint declaration - The Schools of Britain and the Peace of the World. Their idea was for the teaching of British history to be presented in its proper relation to the history of the world. This concern came into being after World War I. However, the League and its 'propaganda', as it was seen to be by some groups, especially the Historical Association, declined in 1936, mainly due to the international climate at the time.

Nevertheless, in three aspects it can be noted that the Union did make a contribution to the development of history teaching in Britain between the wars. First,

'the propagation of a new emphasis on history teaching required historians and teachers to reconsider basic philosophies. The Union undoubtedly wished teachers to adapt this different internationalist emphasis which it stressed was wholly benign.' (1)

1) B.J.Elliott, The League of Nations Union & History Teaching in England: a Study in Benevolent Bias - History of Ed. 1977, Vol.6, No.2, p.141 (Taylor & Francis, 1977).

Secondly, at a time when history text books were becoming widely available in British elementary, as well as secondary schools for the first time, the Union drew the critical attention of teachers to the content and presentation of these publications and in a 'minor way may have helped to remove the worst excesses of distortion from them.' (1)

Finally, by the League's criticism of 'narrow nationalism' in history syllabuses it helped to bring about the expansion of historical studies beyond Britain, and then to European history. So that although short-lived, it did exert some influence on the content of the curriculum. Even the Board found history stories to be more often than not:

'lacking in interest or in historical significance. They were not always presented in chronological sequence and are often too unequally distributed over the range which they are meant to cover.' (2)

Syllabuses, it was argued, were over-loaded and:

'should be built round the stories of the great men and women of the past, and, when their outline can be seen through the mists of time, the lesser men and women too. Impersonal matters can then be introduced and made alive in the glamour of the personal story.' (3)

It was suggested too, that the 'child must be given time not only to hear about historical characters but to read about them, to think about them, and then to talk and to write about them.' (4) Perhaps this referred, to some extent,

1) B.J.Elliott, op.cit., p.141

2) Board of Ed., General Report on the Teaching of History in London Elementary Schools (HMSO, 1927), p.5.

3) Board of Ed., Ibid., p.16.

4) Board of Ed., Ibid., p.16.

to the need for encouraging the development of individual initiative.

The Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers of 1927 was not written to impose any regulations supplementary to those contained in the Code, which had stated that the general aim of the elementary school was 'to bring them (the children), to some familiarity with the literature and history of their own country.'⁽¹⁾ The Handbook suggested, that at the infant stage it was felt that:

'no teacher of younger children can afford to neglect the practice of this art of story-telling or to relegate the story-telling lesson to one poor period a week as is sometimes done under the impression that the matter is of minor importance. The beginnings of history can be made with tales of adventure and discovery, which also form a most attractive introduction to geography.' (2)

History as a school subject was seen as the:

'story of the doings of grown men and women, and of the society in which they lived, and that history is a continuous narrative of events bound together as cause and effect, and that the teaching must develop in the child's mind, a sense of this continuity.' (3)

It was also recommended that English literature should be used since history and literature are in reality one and indivisible, for the 'literature of any period is the expression of the life and thoughts of that period.'⁽⁴⁾ To give this sense of reality, it was advised that children should have the opportunity to hear or read a story as it was told first-hand.

1) Board of Ed., Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers (HMSO, 1927), p.8.

2) Board of Ed., Ibid., p.52.

3) Board of Ed., Ibid., p.114.

4) Board of Ed., Ibid., p.115.

Attractive short stories should form the substance of the instruction in the junior classes since the appeal to the child's imagination in teaching plays a great part in history. These stories should not be limited to one country or one age. This would enable the child's imagination to have free scope, and:

'let it receive unawares vivid impressions of other ages in which manners and ideas and environments were very different, while human nature was nevertheless the same, in other words, to awaken in a rudimentary form that sympathy with the past which is the necessary foundation of the historical sense' (1)

and thereby to empathise in a meaningful way. Lessons merely reading from the class reader were frowned upon.

The Hadow Report - the Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary Schools (1931) pointed out that:

'in the primary school much of what is commonly taught as history may better be read as literature. We have in view partly stories, such as legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood, which are priceless national treasures but not serious history, and partly other stories of genuine historical texture that make a strong appeal to children but cannot, in the simple form in which they must be presented, be used to build up the notion of historical continuity. A child may gain useful historical material from such stories but he should read them as he may later read an historical novel, mainly for the interest of their contents. In the same way a child may well read in these years a simple connected history of his own or another country, not for the purpose of learning the story in detail, but in order to obtain a general outline of it which he can fill in at a later stage.' (2)

1) Board of Ed., op.cit., p.119.

2) Hadow Report, p.100.

The Report listed various literary sources from which to draw a supply of suitable subject matter, including Bible stories, classical narratives, mediaeval romances, stories of travel, exploration and intervention. However, the main areas of interest to the committee were those of the selection both of topics to be covered, and of the subject matter connected with them. The committee was warned about three main areas: first, the fact that the syllabus could be too miscellaneous; secondly, that the topics could be chosen without regard to the suitability for the young children in elementary schooling; and thirdly, they were apprehensive as to whether the work may degenerate into mere anecdotes of no value historically, and of little value in any other direction.

The Report also stated their intentions that the history taught should not be confined to British History, although the consensus of opinion remained that the work should consist mainly of topics selected from this area. The idea of teaching history through topic work was still adhered to, and further recommended in the hope that 'history through topics may serve as an introduction to, and illustration of, the different stages of civilization, though more coherence is desirable than is shown by the various topics that figure in some schemes.'⁽¹⁾ Another idea put forward was that of trying to select topics which have some important bearing on the present,

1) Hadow Report, p.169.

or which are actually in the present. At the same time though, :

'care needs to be exercised in the primary school lest the romance of history disappear altogether. For although such stories as Hereward the Wake and Ivanhoe might appear to have no important bearing on the present, the child who has not become acquainted with them has certainly sustained real loss, not only spiritually and mentally, but on the side of historical comprehension also.' (1)

It was to be hoped that the method of historical topic work would begin to assume the character of a connected narrative in which the process of change was to some extent traced. Generalising, the Hadow Report advocated topics which may serve as an introduction to, and illustration of, the different stages of civilization; broadening into the study of ancient and pre-history of other civilizations too. The 1931 Report hoped that at the end of the primary school, the child would be able to:

'read a simple history book with some real understanding, and its main outlines are not unfamiliar to him, and if in addition he is beginning to have a lively sense of the bearing of history upon his everyday life and environment, the course will have accomplished its purpose and its work will have been well done.' (2)

Here is the hope expressed of some development of the concept of relevance and purpose of history teaching.

Recommendation 30 summed up the aim -

1) Hadow Report, p.169.

2) Hadow Report, p.171.

'We are of the opinion that the curriculum of the primary school, is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience, rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored.' (1)

The committee went on to state that they believed that their recommendations would form a 'better foundation for the secondary stage of education than can be provided by any attempt to acquire at the primary stage a knowledge of historical facts which properly belongs to the later stage,' (2) but which many teachers still felt was the essence of a good foundation in history.

The content of History teaching was ever increasing, especially after the 1937 edition of the Handbook for Teachers stated that the period 1815 to present day should be taught in the final year at school. The growing emphasis was on the inclusion of post-World War One material, and more about the present day Parliament and administration, with topics including trade, transport, government and finance. The Handbook also stated that it wished to see the narration of History to be interspersed with reading, discussions, mime, dramatization, and making of notes, and a connection between History and Geography.

This new direction in History was extended to include more foreign and local history. However even though this was advocated, the majority of elementary schools still concentrated on pre-history, but expanded the content of

1) Hadow Report, Rec.30.

2) Hadow Report, p.171.

history, geographically, which was to later expand into the full teaching of World History. Alongside this was a movement away from political, military, and constitutional history, to history which stressed more the personal, social and industrial aspects of development. The emphasis in elementary schools on personal and biographical History led to more social history. This in turn was implementing the aim of the Hadow Report in trying to give the child an understanding of society and the working of its institutions.

Much of what was advocated by Sir Percy Nunn in Education : its data and First Principles was taken up by the Hadow Report but his comments on the importance of history as part of an individual's social framework is paramount.

'It is moreover, easy to recognize the deep influence which the 'social heritage' - the whole body of traditions and institutions of a people - has upon the growth and structure of the individual mind. To deny or to seek to minimise these potent facts would be to exhibit a strange blindness to reality.' (1)

This was the aim of the early twentieth century theorists but the impact of two World Wars interfered with practice : yet without the continuous thread of teaching historical facts through stories and story-telling, many children would not have been reached at all.

1) Nunn, Sir Percy, Education, its data and First Principles.
(Arnold, 1945), p.219.

b) 1940-1980

The 1944 Act changed the existing education system by incorporating some recommendations and organisational changes put forward in the 1926 Hadow Report, 'The Education of the Adolescent'. Schooling was now divided into two parts; primary and secondary, with the division occurring around the age of eleven years. The term 'elementary' was abolished in favour of 'primary' education from five to eleven years, followed by secondary education which was divided into three categories to cater for 'age, aptitude and ability'.

After the Second World War, and until the cutback of teacher training numbers in the 1970's, considerable interest was taken in history for five to eleven year olds. This came mainly from enthusiastic individuals, but the Ministry of Education did publish a pamphlet in 1952 - Teaching of History - stating that stories are to be the staple diet with integration of the past into other areas of the curriculum. The use of artefacts as evidence and the building up of class museums indicated a forward-looking approach.

In the primary sector where class teachers were responsible for all subjects, there were developments leading to a more 'child-centred' curriculum and incorporating the now favoured methods of 'discovery' or 'activity'. So the effect of this on the teaching of History was mainly seen in the method rather than the content. As Parton noted:

'in many schools the effects of such progressive educational thought had not made great inroads. Although most schools now

included History, many of the pre-1944 Act features in content and approach continued.' (1)

What mainly happened after 1944 was seen in the 'horizontal' extension of the syllabus paying less attention to European and World History than previously, and many books concentrated on British History. The study of local history increased, but many teachers and schools were rather reluctant and hesitant about this area, saying that a few suitable books were available. The emphasis on the personal and social aspects of History continued, while a concentration on true facts and a general improvement in historical accuracy in books occurred. Alongside the improved techniques in printing and publishing, came improved presentation of material in the forms of text-books, story books and reference books.

On the whole, the greatest change in history teaching concentrated on the method and approach given to the subject. Schools were still teaching History by means of the traditional oral lesson, supplemented by an interlude of question and answer and maybe some creative work, including drawing, art and craft, writing, drama and role-play, but the latter tended to be in the minority. According to Parton, in the 1960's, in the more progressive schools where 'activity' and 'discovery' methods were in use, the teaching of History was affected,

1) J.G.Parton, The Development of the Teaching of History in Schools in England during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, (Liverpool,1966),p.135.

usually in one of two ways: either it continued as a labelled subject on the timetable with progressive methods being introduced into its teaching, or, in the most advanced schools of the time, the movement towards the integrated curriculum meant that history nearly disappeared as a subject, and its study was absorbed in general 'topic' or discovery work. This is very similar to what is happening in the classrooms of the present day. 'Where work is conducted on the basis of an integrated curriculum, History becomes worthy of study only when it impinges on the current centre of interest.'⁽¹⁾ This in turn led to more demand for the publication of junior reference books mainly for personal 'research'.

History was being taught as an aspect of a general centre of interest or through individual or group investigations, making use of new reference books especially written to appeal to children.

Unstead in Teaching History in the Junior School (Black, 1956), wished to see history teaching continuing to be taught chronologically since 'history is a process of time',⁽²⁾ and a continuous story which must be presented as such. At this time the 'concentric' history syllabus was common and the 'patch' or 'topic' methods were also infiltrating the classroom. Unstead was in no doubt that a chronological treatment of English History across the four years in school was the best

1) J.G.Parton, op.cit., p.135.

2) R.J.Unstead, Teaching History in the Junior School, (A & C.Black, 1956), p.13.

basis, and that local history maybe used as a supplement rather than in its own right.

He saw story-telling as a very active part of teaching, backing up the Ministry of Education thoughts that:

'If history in its full sense explains and interprets heritage, these stories are among the most precious parts of that heritage itself. They are at the root of an interest in history...well chosen and well told they are self-justified. They stimulate the child's imagination and extend his experience.' (1)

Accuracy was to be adhered to; Catherine Firth also advocated this view - less of sickly romanticizing or legendary half-truths. The content of a syllabus should, according to Unstead, be a broad period which is a unity, with stories about particular people arising from the background which a child increasingly understands. Unstead's syllabus was divided into four parts beginning with Early Times; the Middle Ages; Tudor and Stuarts and ending with Georgian and Victorian Britain 1700-1900.

The 1959 publication Primary Education (Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others Concerned with the Work of Primary Schools) included History. Stories, again, formed a major part of the History taught, with many not only concentrating on heroic events and people, but on a movement, for example, the Crusades.

1) Min. of Ed., Pamphlet No.23, Teaching History, (HMSO, 1952) p.26.

Stories were seen as an important introduction into historical material. Children need not necessarily understand the content; they need not have a sense of time, but through stories they can be given a 'new world to explore, remote but real, colourful and complete'.⁽¹⁾

The use of original sources and artefacts was also gaining momentum in the classroom, and so it was necessary to maintain accuracy (in a general sense) and the correct language so as to give the right 'feel' of the period. Teachers were advised to seek help and advice by Historical Association publications, and lists of suitable story books, plus new reference books, were made available. The value of the simple illustrated time chart was suggested as a framework into which stories could fit. J. West in his Dudley research found that this use of stories and time charts was effective for a clear understanding of the concept of time. Much more use of illustrations and first hand material was occurring, with interest in local stories, local history and more school visits. The teacher's task in the field of history was first to feed his pupils' imaginations with good stories, and secondly to arouse their intellectual curiosity about the past.

This appeal to historical imagination was stressed in the 1962 edition of the Handbook for History Teachers stating a necessity for a wide range of stories, without

1) Min. of Ed., Primary Education, (HMSO, 1959), p. 277.

confining them to British and European History only, and the BBC series 'Stories from World History' was given as an example. Again the idea of using the language of the times was suggested, with the use of actual extracts from original sources. It was about this time that the idea of history being taught solely in a chronological sense was being challenged, stressing the need for flexibility and 'topic' studies. More text-books and junior reference books meant that individual topic work became increasingly more favoured, for example Then and There Booklets, (Longman); History Bookshelves and Museum Bookshelves (Ginn). The 1960s were also important for the establishment of the Schools Council in 1964. This body financed projects of research for curriculum innovation. History had some place in three projects : Environmental Studies 5-13; Social Studies 8-13 and History, Geography and Social Science 8-13, (Place, Time and Society). However, history was not dealt with in detail. The progressive attitudes identified with individuals in the early part of the twentieth century had not yet been taken on board, but in the post-war period, interested teachers, advisers, HMI's and education officers began discussion groups, area conferences, exhibitions of work and in-service courses which helped teachers to achieve a sense of identity and a unity of purpose.

These new developments of thought in the methods of teaching began to influence content material. The developments emphasized the need to teach skills and concepts rather than a particular content-based syllabus.

The Piagetian scheme of children beginning by studying topics close to their own experience, and moving out concentrically in a process of self-discovery was advocated; for example, looking first at their own homes, then at their streets, then at their towns, until they eventually reached a study of the world as a whole.

This idea of history backwards from the present, and making comparisons with the past, was strongly favoured by M.Pollard in his book History with Juniors (London, 1973). He stated its importance:

'As an approach which, while stretching the intellectual capacity of the ablest children quite far enough, it provides scope within which everyone can work on the particular segment of history which is of most importance, relevance and interest to junior and middle school children.' (1)

The content of this method was mainly to involve family and local affairs, close to the child's own experience, with emphasis placed more on the collection of materials for discussion, displays and drama. The aim of this was to promote the idea of sequence rather than studying periods of history. This 'first person history' was the starting point before arriving at local, regional and finally national topics. 'Oral history' and field-work were concepts being further enhanced by this kind of teaching.

1) M.Pollard, History with Juniors (Evans Bros., Ltd., 1973), p.9.

Today there is considerable variety of approach, content and method. The traditional approach, common in the 1960s to commence with early history; cavemen, Greeks and Romans with younger children and to proceed in chronological order is probably still in evidence today, and it was the Plowden Report (1967) which brought the criticisms of this type of history teaching to the attention of more people. Yet:

'Most would agree with what Sybil Marshall has called 'two by four education', (that is, education which takes place solely between the two covers of a text-book, and the four walls of a classroom) should be minimised at primary level, and that the found environment of hedgerows and local industries and the teacher-created environment of displays and resources should be maximised.' (1)

Sybil Marshall's method of teaching was against 'the common-place history text-books...though these still have their place in every school as 'private readers' for the children, who can then fit the jigsaw of historical knowledge together and have the very best of both worlds.' (2) Her approach was to use the genuine sources of real living history to ensure that learning would be more active and interesting.

At the same time, Unstead's books still encouraged a dogmatically formal approach, and The Handbook for History Teachers (Burston and Green, 1962), to a large extent agreed with Unstead, but did visualize other

1) G.R.Batho, History - A most crucial element of the curriculum - LEA Guidelines for the Teaching of History 5-16 in Teaching History (H.A. No.42, 1985), p.3.

2) S.Marshall, An Experiment in Education (Cambridge University Press, 1963), p.50.

teaching approaches ('patch' and 'topic'). The 'line of development' approach was gaining interest, which M.V.C. Jeffreys, in History in Schools-The Study of Development (1939) had advocated earlier, whereby the pupil follows a course in which he studies themes - the home, education, medicine, transport etc., - and traces their development through the ages. Jeffreys wished to see an integrated understanding of the past, achieved through the study of a number of suitably cross-referenced themes. Work was to be geared more into 'topics' as opposed to 'periods' since 'topics' 'supply a central theme from which subsidiary investigations can radiate as far as time and the pupils' intelligence allow.'⁽¹⁾ The object of the 'line of development' method was to ensure a continuous theme throughout a whole series of lessons. However, hindrances occurred due to a lack of text-books advocating and implementing this kind of course. Plowden also supported some idea of chronology, reflecting that by the end of primary schooling children should have acquired some concept of chronology in history in respect of the broad sequences of the events and aspects of history they learn about. Plowden stated that History should be taught as part of the integrated approach with Geography and might be studied topically at intervals instead of solely chronologically and systematically. Time Charts were again recommended.

The early 1970s witnessed a change of attitude to the idea of chronological teaching, as was evidenced by

1) M.V.C.Jeffreys, History in Schools - The Study of Development (Pitman, 1939) p.34.

D.G.Watts in his The Learning of History (Routledge,1972).

He believed that children are more capable of grasping the notion of change in time if successive topics are so differentiated by dress, weapons, mode of transport and so on. History was being taught in broader aspects as the notion of integrated studies came into being. plowden had already stated that 'the spilling over of history into other aspects of the curriculum is probably the most general advance of recent years.'⁽¹⁾ Local history was gaining more advocates of what ought to be taught. It was seen as part of social or environmental studies, and the Schools Council Environmental Studies Project of 1972 laid stress on historical work, through activities involving maps, plans, profiles and photographs.

So history teaching became a mixture of teaching by a line of development approach, the study of a period in depth, the local approach, starting from the environment, and a source-based approach; working as a historian and using the historian's skills. The idea of a more integrated timetable was highlighted in the DES publication Teaching History (HMSO,1972).

The ideas of M.Pollard, of the greater need to push backwards in time from the present to about the year 1800, and to build on the child's own experience and materials immediately available in the family circle, based on the child's own effort and initiative, was

1) D.E.S., Children and their Primary Schools - The Plowden Report, (HMSO,1967), par.622.

becoming more accepted as a classroom technique. Again first-hand experience was emphasized and supported by the HMI Primary Survey (1978). The three advantages of the local history approach outlined by Pollard, can be summed up as follows: usually there is no shortage of easily available source material; it provides a scope within which everyone can work; and it can stretch all abilities. However, local history was not to be the beginning and end of history as stated in the HMI View of the Curriculum (1980) - children should also acquire some concept of historical chronological learning, to distinguish between fiction and historical fact and pupils should gain some knowledge of Britain's role overseas today and in former years.

This is supported by Piaget who identified 4 stages of intellectual development broadly associated with children's chronological ages. The 7-11 years stage, called the 'concrete operational' is a period during which logical thinking develops. Most pertinent to history, are the development of the concepts of sequencing, time and, from the empathetic point of view, an awareness of other people's positions.

However, the conclusions of the HMI Primary Survey (1978) did not show history in a particularly good light:

'In four out of five of all the classes which studied history, the work was superficial...It was rare to find classes where the work, even in a simple way, was leading the children towards an understanding of historical change, and the causal factors involved, or where children were becoming aware of the value of historical evidence.' (1)

1) D.E.S., Primary Education in England, (HMSO, 1978), par.5.127, p.73.

There was a lack of planning in schemes which could lead (and often did) to a fragmented approach.

'A framework is required to provide some ordering of the content being taught. This may be a single path through a chronological sequence or a more complex series of historical topics which, while not necessarily taught in chronological order, should give a perspective in terms of the ordering of events, or by means of comparison with the present day.' (1)

The content should be national but be closely related to local and world history where possible. Modern World History should be included from about 1900, but only taught in the later years, since it involves many countries, difficult names and a facility with the changing map of the World. History of 'everyday life' should be given importance. On the national level it can be said that all primary schools should help their pupils to appreciate that today's world grew out of yesterday's, and to acquire some sense of historical chronology, even if the topics studied are not presented in chronological order. The children should learn to distinguish between fiction and historical fact and some should begin to recognise that historical evidence may itself be partial or biased. The youngest children's introduction to the past might concentrate on the immediate circumstances of their own families and friends, and the paraphernalia of daily life. But today's world cannot be understood without knowledge of Britain's overseas role, today and in the past, and reference to

1) D.E.S., op.cit., par.5.128,p.73.

this should certainly be included in the later primary school curriculum in a balanced and sensitive way as a means of helping children to understand our multi-cultural society. However a collation of replies (by G.R.Batho) representing 33% of L.E.A.s, indicated that authorities 'did not have guidelines for history teaching as such, but that a number of discussion documents on the curriculum have been or were being prepared...' (1) Working parties incorporating practising teachers were drawing up aims and objectives for History in the Primary School. One authority firmly rejected guidelines:

'It is only at the grass roots where real curriculum development can take place, and guidelines handed down on tablets of stone from the L.E.A. tend to be ignored.' (2)

All authorities, however, supported the statement - 'History should be viewed as a method of enquiry, as well as the acquisition of knowledge.' (3).

Yet another Local Authority (Barnsley) suggested in draft guidelines for Primary school children, that children leaving the primary school should be able:

'at an appropriate level to reconstruct aspects of the past truthfully and imaginatively, to appreciate sympathetically the views and values of peoples of the past, to understand something of the key concepts of history, to collect evidence from a variety of sources, to ask questions of that evidence, to attempt to arrive at conclusions, to express those conclusions

1) G.R.Batho, History - A most crucial element of the Curriculum - L.E.A. Guidelines for the Teaching of History, 5-16 - Teaching History, No.42, (H.A.1985), p.3.

2) G.R.Batho, Ibid., p.3.

3) G.R.Batho, Ibid., p.3.

coherently in speech, drama, writing, art, sketches, maps, plans, graphs, diagrams and models, and lastly to understand and use historical vocabulary.' (1)

Yet the H.M.I. Report of the same year admits that,

'It is difficult to compile a definitive list of historical concepts and ideas which are held to be necessary conditions for historical understanding...but nevertheless there remain three concepts fundamental to all historical study and to which all others relate: cause, change and evidence.' (2)

Many of the skills, which are advocated for children of primary age-range are general study skills, such as page-referencing and scanning of books and pictures, using encyclopaedias, and knowing how to use the contents lists, indexes and glossaries of books. The specific historical skills aimed for, would include the basic mathematical vocabulary of time, sequencing of historical events, and an empathetic appreciation of the past.

Although History may still be studied as a single subject in schools, this is now becoming the exception rather than the rule. There has been a decline of the chronological outline of British and European history and instead there has been increased attention paid to world and local history. The advocates of world history see its study as contributing to the development of an international rather than a national outlook, with emphasis on the contemporary aspects most commonly

1) G.R.Batho, op.cit., p.4.

2) HMSO, 1985, p.14.

justified on the grounds that it is more 'relevant' to the pupil, that is, it is seen as being much closer to the pupils' needs and understanding.

More recent books used in the classroom include Openings in History by R.Unwin (London,1979), which reverse the traditional sequence of historical textbooks. Instead of concentrating on the textual information with illustrations used purely as decoration, this new series presents the sources of evidence before the text. The opening to each topic is therefore, a pictorial or material object, an eye-witness account or a diagram, which pupils then explore through structured questions and exercises. Only after children have been guided towards their own deductions do the pupils reach the narrative panel of text, which summarises the chronological development of the period. This course is based on British economic and social history, from prehistoric times to the present. Oxford Junior History, A.Burrell (OUP,London,1980) is based on the same lines, concentrating on events which have shaped British Society. The later course was developed in co-operation with the BBC and can be used alongside the schools radio programmes.

In summing up, the teaching of history in the 1980's :

'depends on skills of reasoning, criticism and communication. History is concerned not with the conveying of accepted facts, but with the making of informed judgements, and to the displaying of evidence on which these judgements are made.' (1)

1) HMSO, 1985, p.1.

But the last word must surely come from the teachers themselves in an interesting response in a curriculum working paper prepared by teachers at Uckfield Teachers' Centre, East Sussex, on Primary History:History 7-13.

'We believe that it is not enough to concentrate on the imparting of skills to children. We tried looking at skills and seeking specific content as vehicles for them and found the task impossible. Equally we reject the proposition that to concentrate on presenting historical evidence in all its manifest shapes and forms hoping that by some miracle a love and understanding of history will rub off on the children, as equally unprofitable. We are, nonetheless, very concerned that children should not be restricted to the written and spoken word in history teaching...We know that a teacher's enthusiasm can be infectious and highly motivating, but we cannot accept that children's historical learning should be confined to this enthusiasm. We argue, therefore, for a structured content presented with point and purpose, with every aid and resource which imagination can suggest and economies permit, linked wherever possible or desirable with other social studies or humanities but not at the expense of losing those particularly and uniquely significant contributions.' (1)

This statement of purpose could well be compared with the recommendations of the Hadow Report.

The content of the syllabus has thus not been greatly altered since 1944, with an outline, usually in chronological order, of the History of Britain from the earliest times to the present day and emphasising the personal and social aspects of the subject. However, history teaching has been affected by the fact that History in teacher-training courses is optional, like

1) G.R.Batho, History - A most crucial element of the Curriculum - L.E.A. Guidelines for the Teaching of History 5-16, Teaching History, No.42, (H.A., 1985) p.3.

many other subjects today, and so there is a certain lack of subject knowledge and specialization. Stress is still put on the content of subject material, as much as on the methodology of teaching, although new approaches have emerged.

CHAPTER 2

STORIES; THEIR VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Stories meet a basic need in children by helping them to bring together and understand what they know, and to realise what they feel:

'In a state of 'suspended disbelief' they can experience joy, sadness, horror, awe, laughter and fear-feelings that give pleasure. And at the same time, they are enlarging their knowledge of the world beyond their immediate experience by sharing the imagined life of the story-teller. Looked at this way, the story becomes one of the most potent of all educational instruments.' (1)

Children get the opportunity of sampling a wide range of literature in terms of themes through listening to, reading and discussing fiction.

The value of stories for children was acclaimed in the Plowden Report - Children and Their Primary Schools (1967) - when the committee stated::

'We are convinced of the value of stories for children, stories told to them, stories read to them and the stories they read for themselves. It is through story as well as through drama and other forms of creative work, that children grope for the meaning of the experiences that have already overtaken them, savour again their pleasures and reconcile themselves to their own inconsistencies and those of others. As they 'try on' first one story book character, then another, imagination and sympathy, the power to enter into another personality and situation, which is a characteristic of childhood and a fundamental condition for good social relationships, is preserved and nurtured. It is also through literature that children feel forward the experiences, the hopes and fears that await them in adult life'. (par.5.95)

1) M.McKenzie and A.Warlow, Reading Matters, (Hodder & Stoughton, ILEA,1977), p.9-10.

Thus, over twenty years ago, the value of stories was reinforced by Plowden in all areas of the curriculum. As a teaching medium it had long been regarded by historians as a vital channel for purveying historical facts, as well as situational descriptions to make the past alive and to inculcate moral judgements.

Stories were seen to work on individuals in many and varying ways and levels. A child's entry into a story is as personal as his interactions with it.

'The reader or the listener enters the story by means of identifying himself with one of the characters : in other words he will see events largely from the point of view of a character in whom he intuitively sees a likeness to himself, or whom he admires and wishes to resemble.' (1)

and by so doing is able to empathise in all situations.

As a child becomes more aware of his own environment he needs to find his own experiences reflected, extended and explored in stories, so that he knows about himself, and his place in the world, and by empathising with characters in stories he can organise his own experiences and communicate them to other people.

Children read (as do adults) for various reasons; to dream, to learn, to laugh, to enjoy the familiar and explore the unknown, for information. They may read for sheer pleasure and they :

'absorb, in their reading, those facets of books that reflect the developmental values that are appropriate to the individual readers at each of the stages of their growth. The child is influenced by factors that have always affected children's reading; his sex,

1) A.Jones & J.Buttrey, Children and Stories (Blackwell,Oxford,1970),p.12

age, health and physical development, mental ability, emotional maturation, and home environment. ' (1)

So although stories may be selected and read to children, each individual will be subjective in his absorption of facts, feelings and information according to his developmental stage. The child must fit himself/herself to the story as well as the story fitting the child.

Stories also offer the child creative and qualitative opportunities to extend and enrich his/her language development. They may provide opportunities for identification, and for understanding the self and others, and can develop and extend children's interests in general.

In 1975 the Bullock Report - A Language For Life, also emphasised the value of all children's literature in bringing the child into an encounter with language in its most complex and varied forms:

'Through these complexities are presented the thoughts, experiences, and feelings of people who exist outside and beyond the reader's daily awareness. This process of bringing them within that circle of consciousness is where the greatest value of literature lies. It provides imaginative insight into what another person is feeling; it allows the contemplation of possible human experience which the reader himself has not met.' (2)

Stories therefore were seen to be very powerful in developing empathy, in assisting personal and moral growth, and by helping a child make his/her own judgements. They

1) M.H.Arbutnot & Z. Sutherland, Children & Books (Scott, Foresman & Company, Illinois, U.S.A., 1972), p.16.

2) D.E.S., A Language for Life, (HMSO, 1975), par.9.2.

are an important agent of socialization and are often a subtle way of transmitting the values of other people. Stories were also recognised as able to 'free' children from the narrowness of their immediate physical, intellectual and social environment; helping them to be more imaginative and creative, bringing with it new ideas both authentic and fictitious.

'When we read meaningful books to children in groups,...we provide chances to share important feelings, to connect in powerful ways to others, peers as well as elders, and to develop the potential for the full dimensions of empathy, which is, after all, the capacity for being human.' (1)

The educational value of stories and story-telling is wide and purposeful ; stories may be used to develop class topics or projects, to increase language abilities and vocabulary, and to foster and sustain creative writing. Stories deserve to be read because they make a statement about life influencing, confirming, modifying and even replacing a child's attitudes, values, outlook, beliefs and conduct.

Much of the power of story lies in the fact that children can meet situations and problems like their own, and which they recognise at a safe distance. By being outside the narrative yet looking in, the child can probe and analyse people and situations.

Stories are a natural way we all have for speculating about the world, or for not so speculating. They may represent theories, which can be checked, or they may be acts of magic, intended to hold what is real and

1) Lois Wolf, *Children's Literature and the development of empathy - Variety is King* (School Library Assoc., Oxford, 1977), p.31.

uncontrollable at bay. Either way, playing with stories is something we start naturally to do as children, and are encouraged in by the special forms of our culture and its shared imagination. Story is part of our everyday experience, and it is a function of our imaginative life and our need to express, order and communicate experiences.

But the basis of all story-telling and reading of stories begins with the parent / child relationship, where an uninhibited flow of questions encourages communication skills. According to many educationalists:

'There is clearly a direct correlation between a child's reading ability and interest in stories generally and its ability to produce a good literate piece of writing. Story, if handled properly by the teachers, should be used to stimulate interest in topic work. The more children read stories, the more literate they become, and they can lay the foundations for a wealth of conversation which can only make them more interesting people in later life.' (1)

Young children tend to be rather self-centred in outlook and attitude, and stories may help them in their maturation process as they begin to see that other people have points of view different from theirs. Since literature is concerned with thought and feelings, it may help a child to develop an understanding of what it means to become fully human; it develops the imagination and helps them to consider places, people and ideas in new ways.

1) R.Poole, Teaching Fiction in the classroom, What Teachers do, Research in Education, No.37, (Manchester Univ.Press, Manchester, May,1987), p.72.

Children should be encouraged to listen to stories being read aloud (especially younger children) since this teaches them about reading and literacy:

'...little things that we often take for granted that children know and yet are absolutely basic prerequisites for reading. They learn about stories, how they have beginnings and ends and that certain things are likely to happen and that they will be able to try and guess what's going to happen.' (1)

The importance of listening to stories is stated by M.McKenzie and A.Warlow, :

'Having books read aloud to them, either by their teacher or other children, will stimulate interest and make it possible for them to read in a context already known. This in turn will build up their expectation of enjoyment and success in reading and generate further interest in books.' (2)

Reading stories to children enables them:

'To see that reading is necessary for their personal lives, for their learning throughout the curriculum and for the requirements of living and working in society.' (3)

And the way to become a good reader is by reading, so it is vital that the children and teachers do see reading as, above all, a pleasurable experience and activity.

Much of the previous research has been consolidated by Charlotte Huck who explores deeply, the emotional, imaginative and empathetic experiences which children derive from books, and the way in which these experiences

1) S.Pidgeon, Learning With Stories, Child Ed.(Scholastic Publications Ltd., Leamington Spa, Oct., 1985), p.26.

2) M.McKenzie & A. Warlow, Reading Matters (Hodder & Stoughton, ILEA, 1977), p.19.

3) D.E.S., English From 5-16, (HMSO,1986), p.2.

help a child to find his place in society and even in time. On the significance of stories she writes in Children's Literature in the Elementary School:

'The imaginative use of language produces both intellectual and emotional responses... vicariously the reader will experience other places, other times and other life-styles: he may identify with others, or find his own self-identity; he may observe nature more closely or from a different perspective; he will encounter the thrill of taking risks and meeting mystery, he will endure suffering; he will enjoy a sense of achievement, and feel he belongs to one segment, or all of humanity. He will be challenged to dream dreams, to ponder, and to ask questions of himself.' (1)

In short, stories help children to build a concept of the society in which they live and of their roles in that society; stories help shape and sharpen their concepts about other people and relationships; and can contribute to an understanding of themselves.

The Department of Education and Science in their survey into Primary Education in England in 1978 showed that the :

'primary school is particularly concerned with the development of language in the education of young children and every aspect of the children's work is influenced by the extent to which they use language with imagination, precision and accuracy. Much of the work undertaken in the primary school is designed with this in mind; through their work in all areas of the curriculum children extend and improve their ability to use language in a variety of contexts.' (2)

1) C.S.Huck, Children's Literature in the Elementary School, (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1979), pp.4-5.

2) D.E.S., Primary Education in England, (HMSO, 1978), par.5.18.

It can be concluded therefore, that 'competence in language develops through the interaction of listening, talking, reading, writing and children's own experience.'⁽¹⁾ and that reading and listening to stories plays a vital part in that development.

In the D.E.S. Survey Education 5 to 9 it was found that 'most teachers gave high priority to telling or reading stories to the children; stories were regarded as an essential part of the curriculum, and provided a source of real enjoyment for the large majority of children.'⁽²⁾ Some schools gave guidelines on the choice of stories and how to use them - the stories were chosen for traditional reasons, which would deepen the children's understanding of people, develop their imagination and increase their experience. What impressed the survey was the very wide range of stories used. Some children heard myths and legends told by good modern authors, whilst others experienced poorly written or retold tales. Obviously there was, and is , a great deal of discrepancy in the diet of stories offered to children.

When learning about people, children in this survey of 80 First Schools, told stories of their earliest memories and about their parents' childhood. Their grandparents and older citizens were invited into school to tell about their own school days, and displays of artefacts, pictures, models, helped to add to the enjoyment of the topics, and

1) D.E.S., op.cit., par.5.19

2) D.E.S., Education 5 to 9 (80 First Schools) (HMSO, London, 1982), p.15 par.2.41.

to stimulate the children to find more anecdotes about the past for story telling and writing. From these oral sessions, extended studies emerged of World War II, Victorian England and other historical topics. It was also found that legends, folk stories and Bible stories were used to develop an understanding of the past, as well as stories of famous people. The importance of the inter-relationship between reading and writing is most evident when we come to look at literature, a fact reinforced in the Kingman Report:

'As they read more thoroughly, pupils should be helped to look not only at ideas and meaning but at how meaning is expressed, and the effects achieved in the process of writing.' (1)

Having evaluated stories in general and given evidence of their significance in teaching and in the learning process the question emerges - what are the criteria of a good story?

Basically a good story must have vivid language and a direct plot. It must also lead into comment and discussion, and this is more meaningful if the reader or teller enjoys the story too. Essential is an appropriate setting with a number of episodes to accommodate the characters and the action. The plot would need logical or causal connections between events and be selected with a particular audience in mind. From my personal survey the vitality and enthusiasm of the teller emerged as an important contribution to the learning process as well as

1) R. Arnold, What Shall we do about Kingman? (Oxford County Council, Oxford, 1988).

giving pleasure and satisfaction.

In the Bullock Report emphasis is laid on the interaction of writing, talk, reading and experience 'the body of resulting work forming an organic whole.'⁽¹⁾, so that reading stories or listening to them cannot be isolated from other language skills. Also, children need 'to develop their capacities to listen with attention and understanding in a similar variety of situations and for a similar range of purposes.'⁽²⁾. This is essential for effective story telling, and in story reading children should be able 'to find pleasure in and be voluntary users of reading for information, for interest, for entertainment...'⁽³⁾, as well as for the usefulness of extending experiences. Therefore among the objectives for children of primary age, it is hoped that under these inter-related categories of language learning, children should be able to listen sufficiently carefully as to be able to follow the plot of a story as listeners and narrate a story or experience in such a way as to hold a listener's attention. Also among the targets of attainment for primary children it is hoped that children will have formed a habit of voluntary and sustained reading for pleasure and information; know how to find the books they need or want in a library, and follow the gist of a story or shorter narrative passage so as to be able to recount it and discuss

1) D.E.S., A Language for Life, Bullock Report, (HMSO,1975) par.1.10

2) D.E.S., English from 5 to 16, (HMSO,1986), p.2. par.1.6.

3) D.E.S., Ibid., p.6.

it. To develop this expertise, time should be provided for:

'private reading; a suitable range of books, advice on what to read, and, especially in primary schools, an environment which encourages reading as a pleasurable activity.' (1)

The range of stylistic variables in stories is vast, but from the point of view of primary children a good story has a recognisable beginning and ending, and is usually written in the past tense - "Once upon a time there was..."

A necessary part of story itself, to aid in the process of understanding and learning, are the literary devices involved in cueing the listener or reader in order to lull the receiver into belief more readily than if they are ignored.

'Repetition for example, is an almost essential feature of build-up where the reader/listener begins to get the feeling that something is going to happen, and grows ever more certain of what it is to be. The shaping of the story, the cueing of responses and the delighted recognition on the part of the receiver of the story, serve as a cover for the explanation of the content of the story. The story's pretence of reality makes its message easier to accept.' (2)

Psychologists believe that children have a fairly wide range of experiences and concepts on which to base their understanding of a story. But stories are for all ages and stages in life, because they enrich imagination and can provide an escape therapy needed by everyone at certain periods in their lives. A good story helps to develop compassion, humour and understanding, and arouses an awareness of other cultures and peoples and a curiosity

1) D.E.S., op.cit., p.15, par.3.15.

2), Fines, p.62.

to empathise with them.

This chapter has dealt largely with the educational value and significance of stories as a teaching medium in literature, classics and Humanities, and as an emotional outlet geared to the child's developmental needs. Literary techniques and stylistic variables often explain which stories are preferred by children, but little has been said about stories read for pleasure. The inference is, that pleasure comes from understanding, achieving and reaching goals, yet if the present sale of Mills and Boon's romantic novels has anything to tell us, it would be that much of the female adult population read for pleasure and for an escapism from the realities of twentieth century living.

Teachers tend to search for stories which will supplement a topic or project, or something which will stimulate the children's interest, enquiry and writing. Stories may be used to entertain, to preserve a culture, to socialise, to draw morals, to introduce new ideas or experience, to test learning and even to control behaviour - all valuable and purposeful, but what about the pleasure? Most adults can remember their first story book (often preserved) and observations of a toddler verbalising his first bold picture-book, which he returns to over and over again. Some children become hooked on particular authors, and others on particular topics, dependent on narrative patterns and presentation, they choose the stories which give most pleasure:

'The immense satisfaction that young people gain from reading good stories makes those

stories the ideal medium for exploring in depth, appropriate topics of concern.' (1)

Much pleasure is obtained from reflection and from exploring a story with some one else, mother, father, teacher or another child, and from re-creating it imaginatively or from using it as a springboard to talk, writing, drama and further reading.

Following the Birmingham Story Study, several strategies are offered to teachers for successful storytelling, which include encouraging children to read for pleasure and not because of pressure. Schools and children's libraries should have a rich variety of carefully chosen books for children to read themselves, or to have read to them by the teacher, librarian or other older children, or from tapes.

Enthusiasm about books and the pleasure they give to the teacher or reader is infectious and by comparing and talking over the stories, children become immersed in the sheer joy of involvement. Similarly, it is best to be honest about books which the reader does not enjoy, and to let this lead to some useful discussion. When my survey was carried out with the children listening to the Powers' stories, some children did not enjoy their story, and were quite emphatic in their decision. But the stories which were most popular were read by teachers who really enjoyed the subject, and transmitted their enthusiasm. Giving children a chance to talk about their likes and dislikes, makes them more discriminating in their choice of books for pleasurable reading.

1) B.Wade, Stories for Pleasure, Literature for Life Series (Arnold Wheaton, Exeter, 1986), intro ix.

Stories can be told as well as read to children, and this technique is widely used in schools and on television. Using all types of body language to express the feelings of the story - movement, gesture, voice and facial expressions helps to make a better telling, as well as involving children in prediction, repetition and sequencing. The use of puppets and simple illustrations adds to the atmosphere. When some infants were told the story of the Wooden Horse of Troy, a school table covered by a blanket was used, and the story became more 'real'.

When stories are read, or told, 'an expressive fluent style is the best way to re-create a story's meaning.' (1)

Again, if the story is familiar and enjoyed by the reader, the atmosphere and feelings are more easily put across. Changing voice from one character to another, and attempting to read in dialect can capture the children's interest. It is also more successful if children are sitting in a compact group where they can see facial expressions, and have eye-contact.

In order to foster the growth of story-telling among children, they should be encouraged to tell their own stories or re-tell favourite stories in their own words. Exchanging jokes, and funny experiences are all part of pleasurable story and story telling, and if children combine to tell part of a story, it becomes a group activity, with opportunities for collaboration.

1) B.Wade, op.cit., Intro.ix.

With today's technology children in school are not confined to 'having to write about' their stories. Their interpretations, questions and narrative can be taped and played back to others, or can be put on to a computer/word processor print-out, working along with other children. Togetherness gives pleasure.

In helping children to internalise stories they can draw scenes, characters, and comic strips to cut out and re-assemble in correct sequence. Drama and puppetry are widely used in folk tales and tales from history. Story streamers can be drawn with folds for each event depicted. The Bayeux Tapestry would be an example of a streamer (without folds), and is a unique form of story-telling.

'While the stories can be enjoyed simply for their own sake, they can be quarried for the additional delight that comes from co-operatively exploring their form and meaning.' (1)

Thus fiction adds considerable depth to fact and an insight into writing as well, but in all cases it is necessary to have some kind of check list in order to select stories that:

- '1) Reflect national, local and individual values, experiences and scenes.
- 2) Introduce children to their own cultural heritage as well as others.
- 3) Provide a vicarious experience of a world they do not live in, in terms of time, space and culture.
- 4) Enlarge the mind and the imagination.
- 5) Offer experience in the creative and scientific inquiry process.

1) B.Wade, op.cit., intro.ix.

- 6) Enable the reader to acquire or change knowledge, values and attitudes.
- 7) Encourage an appreciation of beauty and human achievement, motivation and aspiration.
- 8) Allow the discernment of good/bad , right/wrong.
- 9) Contribute towards development intellectually, psychologically and socially.
- 10) Provide enjoyment. (1)

The aim of all literary involvement makes for better understanding and enjoyment and as there is such a wealth of material available, children may be immersed in all kinds of situations with different value systems and diverse cultures. Stories, therefore make their own contribution towards the self-cognitive and self-development in wider terms, of a child. Psychologically, stories can explain complexities and comfort anxieties. Therefore it is important to hear a wide selection of them in order to help the child to 'sort itself out'. 'Learning takes a long time and will be aided and built up by a whole variety of story and narrative form.' (2)

1) M.R.Marshall, The World of Children's Books, (Grafton Book, Aldershot, 1982), pp.123-4.

2) Fines, p.65.

CHAPTER 3

THE PLACE OF STORIES IN HISTORY TEACHING

Throughout the period covered by this study the value and significance of stories in the teaching of history has been acclaimed by the Board of Education and its successors - the Ministry of Education and the Department of Education and Science, H.M.I's and all other members of the educational hierarchy concerned with bringing the tales of the past to the children of the day, and because of their popular appeal, historical stories have been written to meet the demand. A chronological survey will show that the teaching of history through the use of good historical fiction was recommended as far back as 1923 in the Board of Education's Report on the Teaching of History, as a means of children knowing our own national story. In the 1920s history teaching was seen as being useful for national propaganda and was essentially factual and content-based, so the Board of Education began to show more initiative in promoting the use of historical stories.

The Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers (1927) first stated that 'history is the story of the doings of grown men and women, and of the society in which they lived, and this story has to be told to children mostly under the age of fourteen years.'⁽¹⁾ The Handbook re-emphasized the general aim of the Code (1904) of elementary schools in which it was hoped to 'bring them (the children) to some familiarity with the literature and history of their own country.'⁽²⁾ The art of story-telling itself was given

1) Board of Ed., Handbook of Suggestions, 1927, p.114.

2) Board of Ed., Ibid., . p.8.

an important place and value in the curriculum, and history, especially with young children, could include tales of adventure and discovery. The Board of Education recognised that History and Literature reflect the life and thought of the period, and in junior classes therefore, stories should be drawn from the whole range of history. During the early years it may not be necessary to distinguish between legend, myth and history, but a careful choice of story is necessary, especially when trying to progress beyond the more stilted reading books.

In 1931 the Hadow Report supported the idea that children up to the age of eleven could be expected to be able to read a simple story and to understand how history affected their everyday lives and environment.

After World War II the production and variety of books increased and the Ministry of Education pamphlet (1952) advocated the use of children's stories in its suggestions for history teaching in primary schools; this was supported again in Primary Education (1959). Here, stories of real people were recommended as ideal for children aged eight to nine years, the narrative being authentic, romantic, heroic and significant; for the older children, stories concentrating on a person or a period were suggested.

'This is as good a foundation as children can have for developing a sense of time which will serve when rote memory fails.'⁽¹⁾ Other stories were to concentrate on a

1) Min. of Ed., Primary Education, (HMSO, 1959), p.280.

movement, for example, transport, the Crusades, discoveries, fashion etc. Stories were seen as being a necessary part in the foundation for the history that was to follow in later school years, and they would enable the children 'to share more fully also in the mental and spiritual background of their country.' (1) However, as well as fictional narratives, the use of original sources was advocated to maintain the correct language and to give the right 'feel' of the period. Teachers were advised to seek help in finding suitable fiction by consulting the publications of the Historical Association.

The Handbook for History Teachers ed. by W.H.Burston and C.W.Green (1962) also contained a list of novels considered helpful in primary schools. They emphasized the fact that the story needed to be accurate, which was no longer in doubt as in previous decades, since writers concentrated more on this aspect, and often had more available information. The need for a wide range of stories of world history was reiterated, and the B.B.C. series 'Stories from World History' was recommended. It was thought that a better perspective of historical time was built up through the grouping of stories, and that 'some children begin to see the past as many pasts and not just as a long-ago time, with historical personages from Caesar to Queen Victoria as more or less contemporary.' (2) The idea of using, where possible 'the very words spoken' was

1) Min. of Ed., op.cit., p.281.

2) W.H.Burston & C.W.Green (eds), Handbook for History Teachers, (University of London Press, 1962), p.18.

strongly supported, again widened by the reading of brief extracts from original sources, especially those dealing with colourful details. In the D.E.S. publication History in the Primary and Secondary Years (1985) the place of history stories again figures prominently, when dealing with younger children, as a way of relating present day children to the everyday lives of children of the past.

'Stories can be used to lead children more and more towards a grasp of historical reality. The stories may not necessarily be wholly true, but will be authentic in so much as anachronisms have been eliminated... Such stories can help children to identify the ways in which the past differs from the now, and those in which it is the same,' (1)

and through the choice of stories themes can be followed which, over a period of time (commensurate with the child's intellectual developmental stages) help the child to differentiate between fact and fiction, promote the development of the sense of chronology, evoke sympathy and empathy with the past, allow the child's imagination to grow, make significant contributions to the child's moral understanding and reveal contentious issues on which judgements may be made.

In Chapter 2 I have discussed the criteria of a good story and a good history story must comply with all of those conditions. The issues must be clearcut and the history story must have a point of view. Action is still best described in words, but pictures, drawings and verbal

1) HMSO, 1985, p.6.

descriptions do complement each other and can give the feel of action to its emotional content. 'Fact used imaginatively - this is what children look for in historical stories - a good story and a full, even a crowded background.' (1)

Historical stories for children can do more than just transmit facts; they help a child to experience the past, and they will 'help children to see themselves and their present place in time as part of the living past.' (2). Children will be enabled to use stories of the past to help them see that situations and places may be different, but such fundamental qualities as human needs and relationships remain the same. A sense of history also enables children to see change as natural and essential. However, this is only achieved if historical fiction meets the requirements of good writing, and the following specialised needs:

- '1) Does the book tell a good story, blending facts with fiction in such a way that the background is subordinate to the story?
- 2) Is the story accurate and authentic in every detail, including the setting and the known events of history?
- 3) Does the story adequately reflect the values and spirit of the times, or is it written from the point of view of today?
- 4) Is the authenticity of the language preserved in both the spoken word and in the description and comparisons of the written word?
- 5) Does its theme provide insight and understanding for today's living as well as in the past? ' (3)

1) M.Fisher, Intent upon Reading, (Brockhampton Press, 1964), p.243.

2) C.S.Huck, Children's Lit. in Elem.Sch., (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1979), p.465.

3) C.S.Huck, Ibid., p.470.

Historical fiction is valuable especially to children of primary age,

'For one thing, like some kinds of travel, reading historical fiction provides the experience of living somewhere else, with strangers, smelling exotic foods over wood fires, seeing flashes of colour in costume and personality. These are alien sensations. Sampling alien worlds is one value of historical fiction. Another value is the reader's discovery during the exploration that there are similarities between characters populating historical fiction, and characters we all live with - and are - today.' (1)

To attract and hold children, these stories must be accurate and reflect all the criteria of good fiction. The way the characters speak and dress must be right for the historical period in which they live; background information about social customs, ideas and events should be accurate, and by describing the small details of everyday living, the past is made understandable.

History in story can take on several forms; it can be set around an actual historical character or event; it can be an adventure story in a historical setting, either pure imagination or a mixture of fact and fiction; it can be time-slip from present to past (and back) or from past to present (and back).

The purpose of historical stories therefore is not to give an exact chronological understanding of history, rather it is to develop an awareness of people living in the past. 'One cannot learn all one's history through fiction. But fiction - the fact implanted in a story - does have a way of becoming knit into the mental processes much more easily, much more permanently, than facts on their own, unrelated, ever can.' (2)

1) J.I.Glazer & Gurney Williams III - Intro. to 'Childrens' Lit.
Mc.Graw-Hill Book Co., USA, 1979) p.377.

2) J.Aiken, Interpreting the past Children's Lit. in Ed. Vol. 16 No. 2

However, Kieran Egan writing in Educational Development (Oxford University Press, 1979), cautions that the real past is too indecisive and grey for young children and that the attraction of the story form is that, according to Aristotle, it has a beginning that sets up expectations, a middle that complicates them and an end that satisfies them.

In 1960 Professor Kenneth Charlton listed three criteria for good historical fiction; first, readability, that is a good style, simple, fluent and intelligible; secondly, it must relate to the content in the reality of characterization and the situation; and finally there is a need for a balance between fact and fiction. He cites Cynthia Harnett's The Woolpack and Geoffrey Trease's The Hills of Varna as good stories, maintaining the balance by their skilful continuing of the tension of the plot. Authors should enable the reader 'to get to know the characters as historical characters, living in a world at first unfamiliar, yet becoming more real as the story unfolds.'⁽¹⁾ He advocates that history stories should be a mirror of history itself and a starting point for historical situations and facts.

A recent (1985) piece of research claims a significant advantage gained from telling history stories is that 'it enables the pupils to tell their own history.'⁽²⁾

1) Charlton, p.3.

2) Jochen Hering, The Return of Story-Telling History Teaching, (Verlag Helmut Lierhaus, Dortmund, 1985), p.224.

Jochen Hering goes on to explain that he is not urging a diet of history stories to be fed to children so that they become entertaining (or boring) raconteurs, but that the child will recognise that his own individual life-history is part of a greater whole in the history of mankind.

Historical fiction should be a part of every child's curriculum, in use in the classroom, :

'Not only because it acts powerfully to generate curiosity about the past, but also paradoxically because it contributes to the creation in children's minds of a more faithful picture of it than that which they infer from standard school books or even from artefacts and documents alone.' (1)

Literature and fiction in general help develop language learning, and through history portrayed in this way, the capacity for historical imagination which lies behind the sense of period and the sense of change through time can be encouraged.

In the past most stories that were used in the classroom tended to serve as an exemplary purpose for moral and practical reasons and criticisms were levelled against teachers telling history stories for this end. This acknowledges that:

'Story-telling...is subjective, it gives the viewpoint of only this special spokesman, it maims reality as it overvalues persons and undervalues structures, it plays into the hands of the often denounced personalization of history, but prevents a more theoretical and objective approach,' (2)

1) Little and John, p.5.

2) P.F.M. Fontaine, International Soc. for History Didactics.
(Wadenswil, W.Germany, 1986), p.142.

but, on the other hand, story-telling in its purest form, is a very necessary part of history. Story-telling and history teaching have the same educational objectives, but sometimes true facts are hard to find in fiction. Historical fiction has no excuse for anachronism because so much is known about the past.

I propose, therefore, to look at what I consider the vital components of a good history story and to evaluate them through the works of the writers and critics of the last half-century. First, the delicate balance between fact and fiction is a theme which has been the concern of most writers of history stories.

Catherine Firth maintained that, 'Historical facts should furnish the background only.'⁽¹⁾ Writing in 1922, she held Scott's novels to be the basis of any history, and ranged in chronological order, they contain a selection of episodes from European and English History.

'Scott's novels supply so full and adequate a commentary on Scottish history that it is hardly necessary to add more in order to interest readers in the subject or to elucidate it further.'⁽²⁾

Geoffrey Trease was one of the first writers of history stories to correct the distorted past picture of people in, and periods of, history in Bows Against the Barons (1934). His effect upon children, and upon the course of historical writing for children has been far greater than that of earlier writers, because of his gift for choosing

1) Firth, p.4.

2) Firth, p.6.

his subjects which showed 'that the past and present are comparable, interacting, interdependent.' (1)

Trease wrote of himself:

'When I write a historical adventure story there must be enough exciting incident and mystery to hold the 'younger' reader. The older ones will be alert and curious to detect emotional relationships between the characters. Each reader gets what he is mature enough to want and absorb. (2)

Trease's novels were to influence subsequent writers because he sought authenticity of fact - so far as it is humanly discoverable and a faithful re-creation of minds and motives:

'In the last analysis a good historical novel is a good novel, neither more nor less, whose story happens to be laid outside the time limits of living memory.' (3)

However, many books with unsound history are far better literature than one in which the details are impeccably researched to the extent that the fictitious element, leading to historical imagination, is swamped. The final story must produce a picture which feels right as well as being right.

Historical stories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were discussed by Helen Cam, in her pamphlet Historical Novels, 1961. The fact that the fiction has to be good and the history accurate is a necessary prerequisite; the story should be both good literature and

1) Fisher, p.234.

2) G.Trease, Books for Children, Vol.7, No.4, (Ashbourne, Derbyshire, 1972), p.5.

3) Trease, p.6.

good history. However, when a child first begins 'to read or to listen to historical novels, accuracy is not of the first importance. What matters above all, is that the story should be interesting.' (1)

Thus through stories it is hoped that children will be stimulated to find out more about the past and develop a need to search out evidence from original sources.

Professor Kenneth Charlton had expressed reservations about the use of historical fiction claiming that the plots tended to be incredible and the history inaccurate. In modern historical fiction these claims, especially about inaccuracy, are hard to support. However, as Charlton conceded, "Scott did show that fiction and historical accuracy were not incompatible." (2) (Obviously he was not as enthusiastic as Firth, on Scott!)

Helen Cam claimed that a good balance between fact and fiction was essential. The facts should be so skillfully woven into the story that they become part of the living action.

The true historical writer must not only get his,

'facts and his concrete details consistent with those established by research; but the atmosphere of belief, the attitudes and assumptions of society that he/she conveys, must be in accordance with what is known of the mental and emotional climate of the place and period.' (3)

1) Min. of Ed., Primary Education (HMSO, 1959),, p.278.

2) Charlton, p.2.

3) Cam, p.8.

Helen Cam discusses why the writer is so important, but above all, what the writer can do that the historian cannot, such as using devices not open to the historian to re-create former ages and situations.

How then is fact to be balanced with fiction?

'The journey into the past gives an impression, whole and vivid; it depends on atmosphere; fact is subordinated to fantasy. The writer of a straight historical story has got to deal far more directly with the stuff of history, and here lies the difficulty.' (1)

Fact and fiction fuse, and for children, this should be into a warm, exciting whole. Margery Fisher gives as examples such stories as Kipling's The Knights of the Joyous Venture, Van Loon's History of Mankind, which offer a vivid feeling of the past. They may not be historically accurate enough to teach their readers historical facts, but they made people want to learn more.

Another outstanding historical novelist of the period is Cynthia Harnett who 'is dedicated to the task of bringing the past to life on its own terms and not as a bright backcloth to adventure.' (2) Such good historical novels as hers evoke an active and enquiring involvement in the past. She attempts a detailed re-construction of what it was like to be alive 'then', the 'then' being precisely located in time and place, for example The Wool Pack. In each of her books she concludes with a postscript disentangling what is true from what is made up. Cynthia Harnett pays such attention to physical detail and reality

1) Fisher, p.225

2) T. Edwards in Children's Literature in Ed. (Wardlock, 1972), No.9, p.24.

of her characters, that she may not leave enough room for the imagination of the reader. All writers of history stories must beware of describing events which may not be related to the settings. However:

'there is a danger in such piling up of detail that the reader's imagination may be overpowered. He may grow tired of being always told what is what. But it is a far more common weakness in historical novels that the 'background' is simply sketched in bold but broad outline before some timeless plot is acted out against it. If the reader is left too free to impose his own assumptions on the action, then the characters are either anachronisms in their setting or else they will be incomprehensible in terms of any but the most superficial motives and relationships.' (1)

Standards of accuracy which have to be met today vary greatly from those historical novels of the past, and Cynthia Harnett writes better history than many historians, especially those who write for schools. Good fiction does not rest on facts alone; they are not enough. Characters and plots need to be of their time, but all would agree that historical fiction, if it is to be considered good, has to have all the normal attributes of any good children's novel:

'The striking opening, the intriguing plot, the element of suspense, and characters who are interesting, who develop as the story unfolds and with some of whom the children can identify. Moreover it must take children back into an historical period whose way of life is unfamiliar, subtly supply circumstantial detail of dress, buildings, goods, transport, tools, landscape and social organisation without clogging the tale with mini-history lessons.' (2)

1) T. Edwards, op.cit. p.28.

2) Little and John, p.11.

Historical fiction helps to make history more vivid and memorable due to the personalizing of past events, and the truth of the setting enables children to 'picture' the scene better.

Writers have to be careful about using anachronisms, too many explanatory passages and being didactic, and as Geoffrey Trease states 'falsifying history to make a better story is a confession of artistic laziness and imaginative poverty.' (1)

Among the popular and successful writers of good historical stories are; Henry Treece, Rosemary Sutcliffe, Noel Streatfield, Iain Serrailier, Ronald Welch, Rhoda Power, Philippa Pearce and Fenelope Lively.

Well written historical novels can be of great value in supplementing the teaching of history by 'clothing the bare bones of fact in recognisable human forms.' (2) The readability of a historical novel, as far as most children are concerned, depends on a good, simple style, action-packed, fast-moving, developed plot, convincing and believable characters, including in many cases at least one with whom the child reader can identify. Geoffrey Trease realized the importance of having a strong plot, basically adventurous, if the book was to appeal to young children. It is a feeling of excitement about the past that children wish to know and 'feel'.

From my own experience, young children are drawn to a story with a good plot and plenty of action. History presents

1) Little and John, p.10

2) Sheila G. Ray, Children's Fiction, (Brockhampton Press, Leicester, 1970), p.101.

us with the facts, and the skills of the writers provide the impact.

For my second observation I intend to look at the individual 'pull' of stories.

In order that children are able to 'feel' the past, a story must be written in such a way that it stirs the imagination, arouses sympathy and enables the child to empathise with the characters. In the 1960s Piaget showed that the primary years seven to eleven, corresponded to his 'concrete operational' stage of development. From the historical point of view at this stage, a child should be able to 'enter into some informed appreciation of the predicaments or points of view of other people in the past,'⁽¹⁾ but this depends on an imaginative interpretation of evidence from authentic information and attempting to experience the past as an on-looker.

As early as 1927 it was suggested that the idea of historical fiction was the intention of giving the:

'child's imagination free scope, to let it receive unawares vivid impressions of other ages in which manners and ideas and environment were very different, while human nature was nevertheless the same, in other words, to awaken in a rudimentary form that sympathy with the past which is the necessary foundation of the historical sense.' (2)

In 1958 Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper wrote:

1) HMSO, 1985, p.3.

2) Board of Ed., Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers, (1927), p.119.

'historical imagination means the art not of making the past picturesque and remote from ourselves, like a castle-pageant, but of making it fully intelligible to us by enabling us to enter, as it were, into the minds and passions of people who, in some ways, seem very different from us.' (1)

In the following year the emotional strength of stories was again highlighted in Primary Education (HMSO,1959):

'Stories...stir the child's emotions and in the imaginative act of putting himself in another's place sympathy is born. Within the narrower circle of historical values, stories in their settings will present children with the idea of change, with a world which is credible and yet other than that they know. At the same time a specialized vocabulary is being built up without which historical knowledge is hardly possible and certainly not communicable.' (2)

Professor Charlton, however, does not see historical fiction as a means of escapism into the past, to be written for and read by children primarily as stories which may prove emotionally satisfying, which was quite the opposite of Helen Cam who in Historical Novels (1961) saw novels having three main uses; for 'escapism, or to stimulate the imaginative and critical faculties and an education in human sympathies.' (3) She asserted that 'the historian worth his salt can no more dispense with imagination than the creative historical novelist can dispense with facts,' (4) and concluded that the history stories which contribute most to an understanding of history are those that re-create an age and a society and a world of past thought and feeling, rather than those which

1) H.Trevor-Roper, The Listener, Feb.27th,1958, Historical Imagination, (BBC, 1958), p.357.

2) Min. of Ed., Primary Education, (HMSO,1959), p.278.

3) Cam., p.3.

4) Cam, p.4.

describe individuals or groups. She thought that these would lead the young into an interest in the past and encourage older children to investigate the past to verify or disprove facts. This in turn could lead to first hand acquaintance with original sources.

Fisher, writing in 1964, said that imagination should come first in historical novels, though that is not an excuse for a statement advocating the disregard of accuracy. A child's imagination will often be more easily aroused if he is reading about a character like himself, whose feelings and actions he can understand even if they are conspicuously different from his/her own.

'It is acceptable to create a fictitious boy/girl and involve them in affairs of state or with historical characters so long as the young reader can really believe in this involvement.'⁽¹⁾

Ann Low-Beer in 'Books and the Teaching of History in School' (1974) reiterates the importance of the imaginative route into history and the power of story to convey a quantity of information. She states: 'that imagery associated with words is more important in history than in subjects where practical and concrete demonstrations can more easily be used.'⁽²⁾ She also emphasizes the importance of historical imagination, that via this imagination one can have an involvement, and

1) Fisher, p.231.

2) Ann Low-Beer, *Books and the Teaching of History in Schools, History*, Vol.59 (H.A.1974), p.402.

experience the 'feel' of a past age, and empathise with individuals of another period.

Historical imagination therefore is a very necessary process of learning history through stories. Coltham and Fines associate imagination at one level with imaging, and add that 'historical imagination requires not only this but usually something more; the words "sympathy" and "empathy" are useful here.' (1) Sympathy is taken to mean 'the power of entering into another's feelings or mind' and empathy to mean 'the power of entering into another personality and imaginatively experiencing his experience.' (2) However, one also has to know how the character saw the world as he did, and why he felt as he did, which...

'depends on an imaginative interpretation of evidence, and, in particular on an ability to beware of anachronism and to imagine historical circumstances, the outcome of which could not be known at the time.' (3)

The question of why does empathy matter and what is empathy like are discussed in Empathy in History - from Definition to Assessment (SREB, 1986). As already stated history involves being able to 'see' and understand people and actions in the past. In order to interpret human actions of the past, empathy is required, and therefore it is necessary to try to share in their thoughts imaginatively. Problems in doing this are obvious, since we have been brought up in the twentieth century with different attitudes, views, ways of thinking and understanding. A stimulating model was recently offered in

1) A.K.Dickinson & P.J.Lee, History Teaching and Historical Understanding, (Heinemann, 1978), p.32.

2) A.K.Dickinson & P.J.Lee, Ibid., p.32.

3) HMSO, 1985, p.3.

Professor Egan's 'binary opposites', for example, good/bad; fear/security; civilization/barbarism. These are profound abstract concepts which even young children already understand. They can be embodied in the characters and events in the stories of a period:

'However, learning about people's ideas is never enough...it is only by trying out such ideas in our minds as explanations of particular actions that we can grasp them properly and see how they relate to the other's hopes, fears and assumptions of the historical characters and their society. This "try out in our own minds" is central to our activity as historians.' (1)

Narrative is important as an appropriate stimulus for such empathetic projection with adjustment and refinement of our responses to take account of differences in culture and circumstances. The differences between historical empathy and fiction (including drama and role-play) is that it is about real people who lived in a certain period of time and place and one needs to take into consideration evidence and facts of the time as well.

Therefore:

'Empathizing is not the same as identifying with, still less sympathising with people in the past; it is simply a word used to describe the imagination working on evidence, attempting to enter into a past experience while at the same time remaining outside it.' (2)

So it is vital that stories must provoke thoughts and stir

1) S.R.E.B., p.3.

2) HMSO, 1985, p.3.

emotions.

'In order to think empathetically, an historian needs to have in mind the information about the modes of thought common in that situation and also knowledge of the individual character's experience and cast of mind.' (1)

The use of imagination in stories is crucial, and the ability to:

'Understand the different feelings, motives, beliefs and customs of the past peoples and the understanding that they "ticked" quite differently to us.' (2)

is necessary, but there is also the need for a bridge to be built, not only between the past and the present, but between fact and fantasy. Historical fiction helps children to make that imaginative leap into the past which genuine understanding of history demands. Such fiction can help the teacher by making clear the reality of the past, helping children to read between the lines of their history books.

Knowing where one came from, helps one to understand and cope better with where one is now. Today we are:

'Standing too near our own particular stretch of history to be able to make out the pattern and "see how the story ends", so... history can best be brought to life for children through people in the like situation with regard to their own stretch of history.' (3)

1) S.R.E.B., p.8.

2) S.R.E.B., p.21.

3) R.Sutcliff, History is People - Children & Literature (The Bodley Head Ltd., 1973), p.311.

The skill in achieving this empathetic understanding lies not only in the story but in the story-teller:

'At every moment of the story the reader has got to be simultaneously convinced of two separate things; first, that the characters are alive and warm and tangible as if they were in the room with him; secondly, that they are not modern people in this room, but that they are in another time and place whose atmosphere they have thrown around him and themselves like some magic pavilion. The achievement of that illusion is really the whole craft of the historical story-teller.' (1)

Empathy in stories has been regarded by many writers as the most important aspect in the impact of stories on history teaching, and a crucial vehicle for greater understanding. However, much depends on the developmental stage of the child, for its ability to empathise.

History by its very nature is the backcloth of the on-going story of mankind and a third pertinent theme in the use of stories in history teaching is the question of chronology and sequencing. Stories act as a good foundation for children in helping them to develop a sense of time and in enabling children to understand better the material background of history. 'The question of children's sense of time worries many teachers who see it as a stumbling block in the development of historical understanding.'⁽²⁾ Psychologists have shown that between seven and eleven years of age an awareness of sequencing and chronology begins to take shape. Even if the concept of the duration of time is beyond children of primary

1) Trease, p.16.

2) HMSO, 1985, p.4.

years, chronology provides a 'framework that enables them to put objects and pictures into correct sequence.' (1)

History in the junior school is often a case of learning about society and people in general, helping to stress and explore the importance of human relationships which is an aspect of a child's development. It can make a child more aware of his/her own identity, and develop a sense of historical time, implying :

'A sense of the passage of time in the physical sense, a realization that there is a past and that people lived in the past. Then it implies an acceptance of the way in which historical events take place chronologically and a willingness to give this type of thinking precedence over other types.' (2)

Thus stories can help in the development of time-sense and sequence. This idea was advocated in the Handbook for History Teachers (1972) stating that:

'The use of story does make it plain that history is primarily about people, in all their diverse humanity, and thus gives to young children a contact with those who lived their lives in quite other times and circumstances and this is of itself an enlarging and enriching experience.' (3)

Story is perhaps the most popular way of teaching historical sequence, even beginning before school, with adults telling children stories often starting with the words... 'Once upon a time, ' which is a way of introducing a story into a historical setting, 'The earliest

1) HMSO, 1985, p.4.

2) P.Mays, Why Teach History? (Unibooks, 1974), p.18.

3) K.Davies, The syllabus in the Primary School in Burston & Green, Handbook for History Teachers, 2nd. Ed., (University of London Press, 1972), p.56.

interpretation seems to be that a story is something that happened in the past, a history rather than a fictional construct...,(1)

A story being written in time adds another special significance, as does the fact that stories almost always have a beginning, a middle and an end. 'In this sense, any story told to a child is the beginning of history teaching, for the one essential about history as a subject is that it concerns human experience in time'.(2)

Supplementary material helps to fill in the gaps as the child's experience is widened, but the concept of historical time remains 'one of the more difficult concepts to grasp in history, particularly since it is learned bit by bit, one thing after another, is the simultaneity of events, and the fact that some are connected and some are not.'(3) The development of the horizontal and vertical perspectives on the past can be helped by teachers discussing fiction read by and with their pupils, and the perception of the complexity of past circumstances and happenings can be sharpened.

Primary school children should enjoy history stories just as much as other stories because the events are sequenced, and ordering in imaginative writing can be developed creatively and individually. The whole

1) A.N.Applebee, The Child's Concept of Story, (Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1978), p.38.

2) P. Mays, Why Teach History? (University of London Press, 1974), p.23.

3) Little and John, p.14.

formation and ideology behind the story-form helps children in the all-important task in their language and cognitive development of sequencing, both in the logical structure of words and basic sentences, and the information portrayed throughout historical chronology in fiction.

'More story-telling is done at certain ages, but explanation of events and people is always needed by the good teacher. As a story is usually told from beginning to end there is a strong time and sequence element, and a teacher must tell the story in the right order to make sense.' (1)

Timecharts, artefacts, pictures and photographs 'not only develop a sense of chronology but relate it to the concepts of "continuity" and "change" and help to identify anachronism.' (2)

The individual concept of chronology therefore depends on the developmental stage of the child. Even many adults have hazy ideas of this and certainly, in schools, sequencing takes precedence in other areas of the curriculum, for example, maths, and science. However, to make children aware of order, sequence and time, much is gained from the input of history stories in the early years.

Most modern authors would agree that amongst the factors appealing to children are the style and language in which the stories themselves are written and for my fourth theme I would like to indicate that changes between historical fiction today and those in the last century

1) J.E.Blyth, History in Primary Schools (McGraw-Hill Book Company, (UK) Ltd., 1982), p.64.

2) HMSO, 1985, p.4.

and beginning of the twentieth century, have been seen mostly in dialogue. Stories can be written which reflect the language of the period, or a writer can use colloquialisms or some compromise in a neutral style inserting period vocabulary. Cynthia Harnett and Ronald Welch are generally both recognised as such writers, who also use historical technical terms with great skill, while modernizing historical dialogue and characters successfully. The use of period words and dialogue by the Powers adds authenticity to their stories.

Authors should attempt to present the literary flavour of the period, but in a way that is understood and enjoyed today. Their stories should be written with simplicity, enthusiasm and sincerity, remembering that words have changed their meanings. Trease was aware that with the use of inappropriate language the characters could be pushed further and further back into the past, creating more barriers between them and ourselves. Therefore, modern speech is necessary at times, but not slang or jarring anachronisms; merely a sensitive compromise. This is important if the readers are to empathise and sympathise with the novel. Trease, himself, cited Robert Graves' I, Claudius, an important and influential adult novel, as accelerating the movement towards using natural living speech. This 'revolution in diction has probably contributed more than any other single factor to overcoming children's prejudice against the historical tale.' (1)

1) G.Trease, p.97.

S.G.Ray also emphasises the importance of the style of dialogue. With regard to historical fiction, the author needs to be thoroughly at home in his period so that he can use the:

'Wealth of detail naturally to capture the right atmosphere without making his story in any way akin to a text-book. The style of dialogue is an especially important factor in the historical novel since it must be credible, thus helping to create the right atmosphere, without being full of either anachronistic phrases on the one hand, or incomprehensible archaic ones on the other.'

(1)

Through experience and maturation children should be able to comprehend the meanings and implications of language used by people in other times and in other circumstances and be able to detect bias.

Children prefer fiction related to the experiences they find easy to identify with, and they choose stories of situations they can appreciate, such as spying, fighting, details of clothes, food, games or transport.

Margery Fisher states that there is no reason to condemn historical stories even if they are prejudiced by the writer's own ideas. This is one 'privilege' in their writing which conventional historians have to be more wary of. Historical stories should have a point of view:

1) S.G.Ray, Children's Fiction, (Brockhampton Press, Leicester, 1970), p.101.

'In some books there is nothing that is incompatible with known fact, historical or archaeological, but no detail, likewise, that is not illuminated by a passionate, tense realization of the past, communicated in a very pictorial manner.' (1)

The historian has to be confined to generalizations and keep things in proportion and balance, but the writer of historical stories can select and may emphasize the line of approach he is in favour of. It is not necessary that the writer gives 'a fair argument' of all points of view. When an author describes evidence that is selected or lacking in balance in that it artificially strengthens a case or weakens the opposition, he/she is said to be biased. By using biased evidence, prejudice may be perpetuated and stories may be used as an agent for indoctrination. To be aware of these pit-falls shows the need to evaluate evidence by understanding the nature of historical language and adapting subjectively.

Throughout the period of this study the historical novel has gained in importance and popularity, helped by 'better characterizations, livelier action, less hackneyed subjects, more vivid backgrounds, a poetic power to evoke something that really is 'atmosphere' and not the reek of moth-balls,' (2), and for the better use of language and vocabulary and accuracy. G.M.Trevelyan defined the good historical novelist :

'If he is to be anything more than a boiler of the pot, he requires two qualities; an historical mind, apt to study the records

1) Fisher, p.237.

2) G.Trease, p.97.

of a period and a power of creative imagination able to reproduce the perceptions so acquired in a picture that has all the colours of life.' (1)

The writers must be sensitively aware of the feelings of the age, the philosophy, political thought as well as the social and material conditions. If these can be portrayed through lively language and vocabulary, then the end product is a good historical story.

In appreciation of these essential themes, story remains a widely accepted and imaginative way of bringing history 'to life'.

1) G.M.Trevelyan, in G.Trease, p.100.

CHAPTER 4

CASE-STUDIES

Some Works of Eileen and Rhoda Power:

In support of my previous chapter, I offer a number of case-studies picked at random from the Historical Association Collection of Out-dated History Textbooks, housed in the School of Education, Durham University. I have, however, concentrated on two authors in particular, Rhoda and Eileen Power, whose historical short stories I judge to be worthy of use in schools today.

I have arranged each story under headings appropriate to the analysis in the previous chapter and based on C.Huck's guidelines for evaluating children's literature, with a supplementary section of my own, relating to historical issues. Furthermore, I have conducted a questionnaire involving 368 children of 9 to 11 years, in fifteen different school situations. Some old readers from the late nineteenth century through to about 1950 have been included. My reason for choosing pre-1950 material is that much has already been written on historical fiction and stories from 1950 to the present day by such authors as Kenneth Charlton, Helen Cam, Vivienne Little and Trevor John, whose findings I have referred to.

The works of authors like Geoffrey Trease, Henry Treece, Ronald Welch, Cynthia Harnett, Rosemary Sutcliffe, Philippa Pearce, Iain Serrailier, Barbara Willard and Robert Leeson have all been given considerable critical attention. I am not suggesting that earlier historical fiction should take precedence over these, in fact many could not be used in schools today due to their outmoded style and

language and overly simplistic plots. My aim is to bring to attention the fact that among our own literature, there are many stories worthy of inclusion in the junior history curriculum, to be used on their own, in conjunction with more modern junior text-books, or alongside more recent fiction.

My previous chapter examined thematically, the place of, and case for, historical fiction in the classroom. I am now including case-studies of short historical stories, to show what sort of material was being used in the past, as an essential part of this historical survey. The presentation of good history usually means that the literature has to be of a fairly high standard. The writer can contribute to historical understanding, by offering 'a stimulus to the imaginative and critical faculties, and an education in human sympathies.'⁽¹⁾

These can be gained through reading the Powers' books because through personalisation with a character they produce an imaginative response which leads to empathy. The Powers' stories need to be valued as an introduction to history, and to be used as an imaginative route whereby the power of story conveys a quantity of information on which to build concepts. Stories :

'Provide a bridge, an area where young pupils can begin to accept, and consider all the many forms of the past, the ambiguity between fact and fiction, the relation of legend and story, to "real" and, eventually, adult history.'

(2)

1) Little and John, p.7.

2). Little and John,p.7.

I also feel that the work of the Powers meets all the criteria of good historical stories - the striking opening, the intriguing plot, the element of suspense, and characters who are interesting and who develop as the stories unfold, and with whom the children can empathise. Accuracy based on historical research is also evident here.

In Chapter 3 I referred to some of the writers' essentials - a good balance between fact and fiction, situations which evoke imagination leading to sympathetic and empathetic understanding, accuracy in sequencing and chronology, and lively language, when subtle word usage not only gives period colour, but helps to formulate judgement, detect bias and avoid prejudiced opinions.

With reference to older novels, it must be noted that the standards of accuracy applied today, were not anticipated. Today's researchers have greatly increased the amount and authenticity of information available about the past, and today's readers are more critical and articulate. When the past becomes real there is a basis for a meaningful discussion of the characters and situations because some of the characters actually existed and most of the events actually happened.

'Stories of great lives, as well as those or ordinary people can begin to show the dilemmas and constraints that people faced as a result of the limitation of their knowledge, technology, wealth and geographical environment.' (1)

1) HMSO, 1985.p.6.

Such a variety of dilemmas influenced my choice of the Powers' stories Boys and Girls in History.

I have based my evaluation on C.Huck's guide lines for evaluating Children's literature (Appendix A) because her main categories enable me to accommodate an analysis of the Powers' stories - as good stories - and also to point out the strengths which make them valuable and significant material for the teaching of history in primary school. In order to re-inforce the historical aspect, I have added my own evaluation of historical accuracy (including chronology), imagination leading to sympathy and empathy, and the introduction of contentious issues which the children may or may not take on board, but which could lead to useful discussion or debate.

I have not used C.Huck's Section 6, because I judged that the black and white (only) illustrations in the Powers' books - often from original sources - would only have minimal impact on primary children today, and the quality of paper, binding etc., do not directly influence the purpose of this research.

I have presented the analysis in tabulated form to make for easy reference, and comparison between the various stories, and I have reinforced my personal evaluation by the questionnaire to the children and their teachers, an analysis of which will follow the case-studies.

Eileen and Rhoda Power wrote Boys and Girls of History to help illustrate life in England from AD300 to the late nineteenth century. The stories in this book or 'studies' as called by the authors, take English children from various social backgrounds and reconstruct their

daily lives, in an attempt to try to, 'secure a more vivid and clearcut picture than would be obtained by generalized accounts of "the manor", "London life", "the Elizabethan stage', ' (1). The children in the stories either existed in history, or they are imaginary characters based on contemporary source material to give a picture as accurate as an historian can make, of daily life in former times.

1) Power & Power, preface.

CASE-STUDY 1 - Short stories by Eileen and Rhoda Power.Boys and Girls of History (C.U.P. 1926)CONTENTS::

1) Lucius has a holiday	(A.D.300)
2) Olaf the Dane	(A.D.857-70)
3) The making of Domesday Book.	(A.D.1085)
4) The training of a Squire	(A.D.1176-91)
5) The Children's Crusade	(A.D.1212)
6) The Novice of Sempringham	(A.D.1283-1337)
7) The Glover's Apprentice.	(A.D.1327)
8) A schoolboy of St Paul's	(A.D.1515)
9) A boy King's working day	(A.D.1550)
10) The childhood of Lady Jane Grey.	(A.D.1537-53)
11) John of the <i>Golden Hind</i>	(A.D.1577)
12) Salathiel Pavy, the boy actor	(A.D.1600)
13) A little Stuart housewife	(A.D.1628)
14) At the Court of the Great Mogul	(A.D.1615-19)
15) Cargo comes to Old Virginia	(A.D.1664)
16) Pestilence and Fire	(A.D.1664-66)
17) Miss-Top-Ashish, the Little Giant	(A.D.1688-91)
18) A visit to Stourbridge Fair	(A.D.1723)
19) George III visits Eton	(A.D.1762)
20) A sheep-shearing at Holkham	(A.D.1798)
21) Little Slaves of Industry	(A.D.1800)
22) On Board the <i>Victory</i>	(A.D.1803-5)
23) The First Railway Journey	(A.D.1830)
24) Queen Victoria's childhood	(A.D.1819-37)

TITLE: LUCIUS HAS A HOLIDAY. (AD.300)

PLOT:

The story is credible with a logical sequence of happenings. The climax comes in the gladiatorial fight. There is no fictional plot - merely a 'day in the life of...'

SETTING:

Descriptions of Roman villa, town, amphitheatre, clothing etc., give an authentic background for characters.

THEME:

"Life in Roman Times" - purely descriptive.

CHARACTERIZATION:

Main character is in evidence right through, but minor characters only in particular locations. They are revealed through dialogue and actions. They behave according to status and the character of Lucius grows as he acts in a courageous manner to save the gladiator's life.

STYLE:

Is descriptive, suitable for children. Narrative and dialogue are well-balanced and the mood varies according to the location.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

There is historical accuracy and a good balance between fact and fiction. Latin words for appropriate buildings give credence to the descriptive passages.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Is possible when the boy empties his money box and sets off to the shops and when he goes to the baths. Listening to the talk of grown-ups and being allowed to accompany them to the amphitheatre.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Evidence of 'class' in society.
- 2) Use of slaves (girl and Negro).
- 3) Morality of gladiatorial fights.

TITLE: OLAF THE DANE (A.D. 857-70)

PLOT:

The story describes the boyhood of Olaf, son of a Danish chief and his subsequent part in a raid on England. The climax comes when the invasion is successful.

SETTING:

Descriptions of the life in a Viking chief's hall in Denmark - then the sea crossing in the 'Raven of the Wind'. The plundering of East Anglia, and the return of the chief to Denmark to die and to be buried in his Viking ship all make the story very authentic.

THEME:

One of the Viking raids in the 9th century.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The main character is Olaf, and all his childhood training and preparation for becoming a warrior is highlighted. There are several bits of dialogue which appear at important parts of the story and add to the growth of the character. His father, Sigmund and mother, Ingeborg, supplement Olaf.

STYLE:

This is descriptive and very suitable for children. Narrative is mainly used, with dialogue at the most exciting points. Various moods are introduced - feasting and jollity precede the invasion, celebration in victory, sorrow and ceremony when the warrior is burned in his funeral ship.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

Historically accurate - especially with reference to the plunderings of Ely and Peterborough Abbeys and the death of King Edmund. Some use of Danish words and good descriptions of Norse life, their gods, the warrior training etc. A good balance between fact and fiction.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

The preparation for a long sea journey in a Viking ship, followed by a raid, could stir the imagination and invoke empathy especially when Olaf finds the English King, and when he escorts his father home to die. The Vikings is a popular project, and imaginative awareness can be supplemented by visits to Jorvik (York).

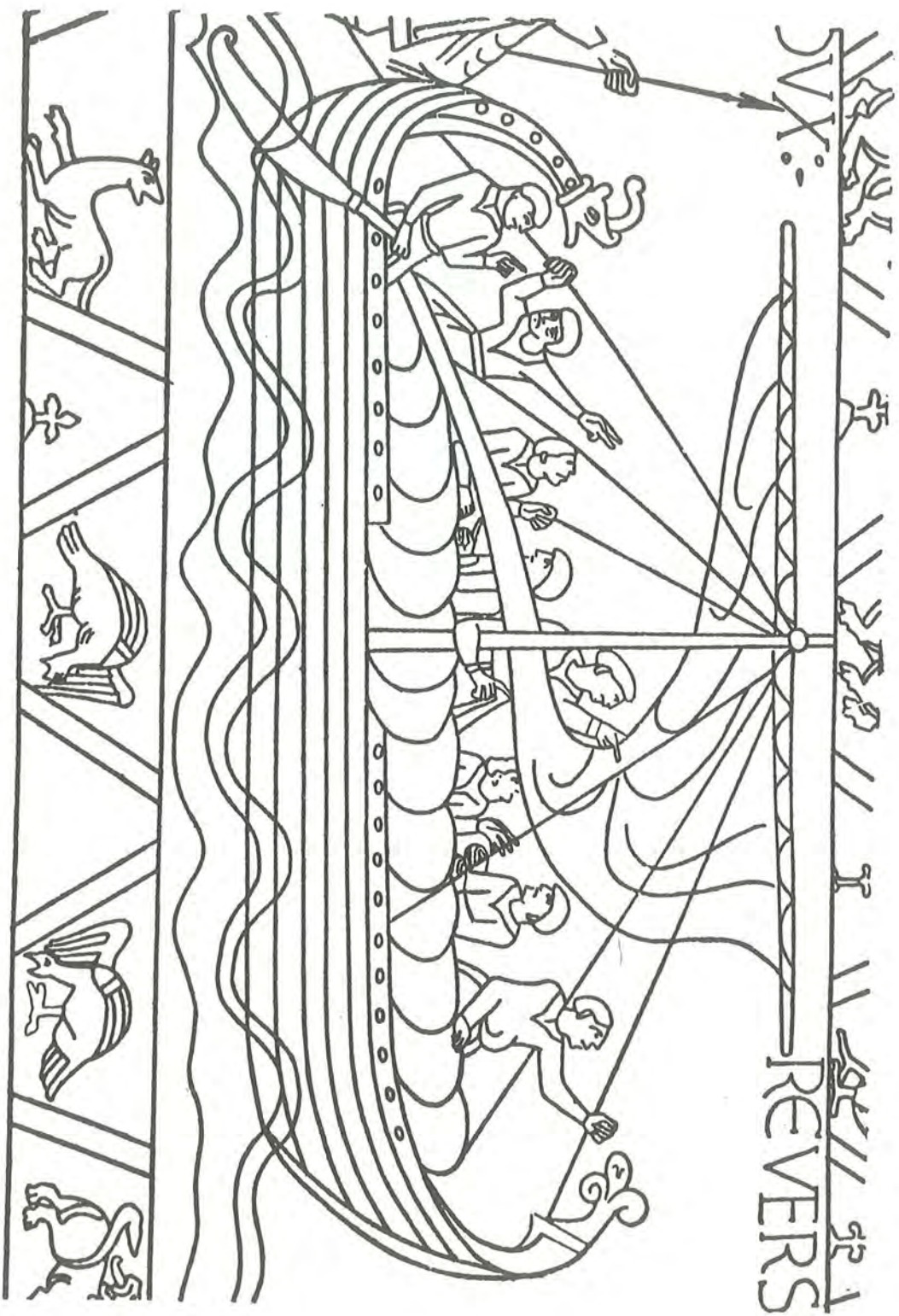
CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Use of slaves for menial tasks.
- 2) Stealing from monasteries.
- 3) Inferior role of women -- mother even has to wait on her son (p.19).

A VIKING SHIP

(from the Bayeux tapestry)

(As used in E. & R. Power - Boys & Girls of History.)



TITLE: THE MAKING OF THE DOMESDAY BOOK (A.D.1085)

PLOT:

The plot is merely incidental to a description of information gathering. There is a logical sequence of happenings, and the climax is when the information is delivered to the Norman commissioners at the Shire Moot.

SETTING:

The story takes place in a medieval manor and the time factor is established by reference to the Conquest. Life in the manor is vividly described and words like serfs, villeins, pannage etc., describe the manorial structure.

THEME:

The compilation of an inventory of the manor of Halesowen for the Domesday Book.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The main character is Gurth, the 10 year old son of a villein, whose curiosity, regarding the counting and measuring around the village, forms the basis of the dialogue and descriptions. Gurth shows maturity when he realises the purpose of the Domesday Book even before some adults.

STYLE:

The style is descriptive, easy flowing with natural dialogue. Anxiety is expressed by the ignorant remarks of the villeins, and humour at the expense of the 'conquered'. There is a good balance between fact and fiction and the imparting of information flows easily enough to be digested.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

Historical accuracy especially with reference to the manorial system. The twist at the end of the story when Gurth forms his own opinions on the validity of the inventories should help present-day children to assimilate taxes, community charge, V.A.T., etc.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

The domestic scene and routine introduce the reader to the daily round, but when the atmosphere of uncertainty pervades the village, this is picked up by the boy Gurth, who is curious to know what is afoot. Here the children can sympathise with his quest for knowledge of the proceedings because the descriptions are so vivid.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Serfdom
- 2) Hierarchy of the manorial system
- 3) Life in an 'occupied' country.

TITLE: THE TRAINING OF A SQUIRE (A.D.1176-91)

PLOT:

The story describes the training of a squire and the action comes in the boy's early games, education and subsequent removal for training to another knight, at the age of 7. It is very credible and the climax comes when, on his birthday, he becomes a squire himself.

SETTING:

First, in his own castle, and then in that of another knight for training and finally as a 'Squire' on a Crusade, which sets the 'period' and provides the relevance. The setting and ceremonial makes the story credible and the descriptions of life style, buildings, sports, games enrich the background.

THEME:

The training of a squire with some moralising on obedience, dedication and service.

CHARACTERIZATION:

Fulke, the chief character, is revealed through the narrative. He conforms to his background and training. There is a slight twist at the end when he rescues a young Cypriot girl, and wears her favours throughout the Crusade, but it also shows how Fulke has matured and could be gracious to his enemies.

STYLE:

The style is straightforward description with some dialogue at crucial turning points in the narrative - with a good balance between fact and fiction. The overall mood is of dedication but this need not be sad. Descriptions of customs, some quotations from original sources and use of period vocabulary, intensify the purpose of the story.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

Historical accuracy is achieved in quotations from 'The Babees' Book' on rules of courtesy and manners. Descriptions of chivalry, battles and Crusades are all authentic.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Children can imagine battle scenes, and experience the thrills of conquest which are so vividly described. Empathy can be reached and is particularly poignant when the 7 year old boy leaves his parents, and on the day when he is made a squire.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

1) the privilege of selective training

TITLE: THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE (A.D.1212)

PLOT:

The story describes the Children's Crusade -- perhaps not as exciting as other Crusades, but there is action, and the plot is credible. There is a logical sequence of happenings but the climax comes when the children set sail from Marseilles as they never reach Jerusalem.

SETTING:

France and North Africa. Eventually a group arrive as prisoners in Jerusalem which they pass through on their way to slavery.

THEME:

The Crusades

CHARACTERIZATION:

Stephen, the leader of the Children's Crusade (French section), has a vision about the relief of Jerusalem as he is minding sheep. When he begins his preaching, and planning, he takes on the role of leader, and develops great control over the children.

STYLE:

The style is almost purely narrative. Dialogue is only used at the 'vision' and when the 'slave' children see Jerusalem at the end. Pathos is evident when parents lose their children and villages and towns have no youth left. c.f. 'The Pied Piper'.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

History acknowledges a Children's Crusade, but information peters out, so the Powers provide a fictional, but satisfactory ending. The balance is good.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Empathy can be reached not only with the main character, but also with the children, by imagining what happens if you are lost, or leave home for a holiday for the first time, away from parents. There is sympathy for Stephen who was so enthusiastic, but fails to achieve his objective.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) A good moral reason for setting out would not be applicable today.
- 2) Capture of children for slave markets.

TITLE: THE NOVICE OF SEMPRINGHAM (A.D.1283-1337)

PLOT:

The plot is weak. Wencilian, daughter of a conquered Welsh chieftain is taken prisoner by Edward I and brought up as a nun to avoid having her own children who might seek their rightful inheritance.

SETTING:

The story begins in Snowdonia and then moves to the flat land of Lincolnshire where the monastery of Sempringham becomes the child's home. The geographical content cleverly supports the contrasting way of life. Vivid descriptions of the daily life and duties of the convent are authentic.

THEME:

Life in a nunnery

CHARACTERIZATION:

Wencilian, the main character, is captured and taken to Sempringham. She accepts her lot quite submissively, although she often longs for her old home with resignation, and gratitude that her life had been spared.

STYLE:

This is straightforward descriptive narrative and the story is told in the third person. Although the story is 'sombre' there are moments of light relief on feast days.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The setting and events are historically accurate and Wencilian, who may be fictitious, is used to describe convent life which may be of interest, but a detached factual image is given of an obedient child.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

It is difficult to suppose that empathy could be aroused as the principal character is rather remote, but there would be sympathy with the orphan who is alone and homesick.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

1) Children committed to monastic life at an early age.

TITLE: THE GLOVER'S APPRENTICE (A.D.1327)

PLOT:

The story is credible and there is action. There is a logical sequence of happenings in the life of Thomas, a trainee apprentice to a glove-maker. The climax comes when he attempts to run away because he has been punished, but finally decides to stay on.

SETTING:

The story takes place in London, and traces the boy's village of Holborn and his walk to his master's premises, with one or two authentic incidents on the way eg. throwing rubbish into the street; a man in a pillory for false trading.

THEME:

The life and training of an apprentice, and the details which give interest to children.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The main character is Thomas and the narrative describes his leaving home and going to Master Edward's house for training. His master is well portrayed and humour is introduced through the mischievous actions of John, the other apprentice.

STYLE:

This is straight forward descriptive with a good balance between narrative and dialogue. Humour is introduced through John, and security and caring through Edward's wife.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The story is well researched and details of London street scenes, shops and apprentice training are accurate.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Empathy and sympathy can be reached through several incidents eg. the pillorying and Thomas's flogging.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Throwing rubbish into the streets
- 2) Punishments - a) putting a cheat into a pillory
b) flogging

TITLE: A SCHOOLBOY OF ST. PAUL'S (A.D.1515)

PLOT:

The actual story is based around William's enrolment and subsequent entry to St. Paul's School. Although this is not exactly rivetting there is a logical sequence of happenings with a climax on Holy Innocents' Day.

SETTING:

The old St. Paul's is vividly described and time is indicated by famous visitors eg. Erasmus and Sir Thomas More. Reference to Caxton, also helps to 'date' the story. The universal situation is of a new boy starting a new school.

THEME:

As the title suggests, this is a good description of a boy's life at St. Paul's at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

CHARACTERIZATION:

William, the main character, is convincing and credible. He is a keen conformist who behaves in a manner consistent with his age and background. He is enhanced by comparison with other pupils, and soon becomes one of the 'chosen' to dine with Dean Colet.

STYLE:

This is straightforward narrative with a good balance of dialogue between the main character and his father, usher and other pupils. Use of contemporary words eg. hallidome, victuals etc., help to set the scene and the vivid descriptions of the school building and lessons 'create' a mood of serious interest.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

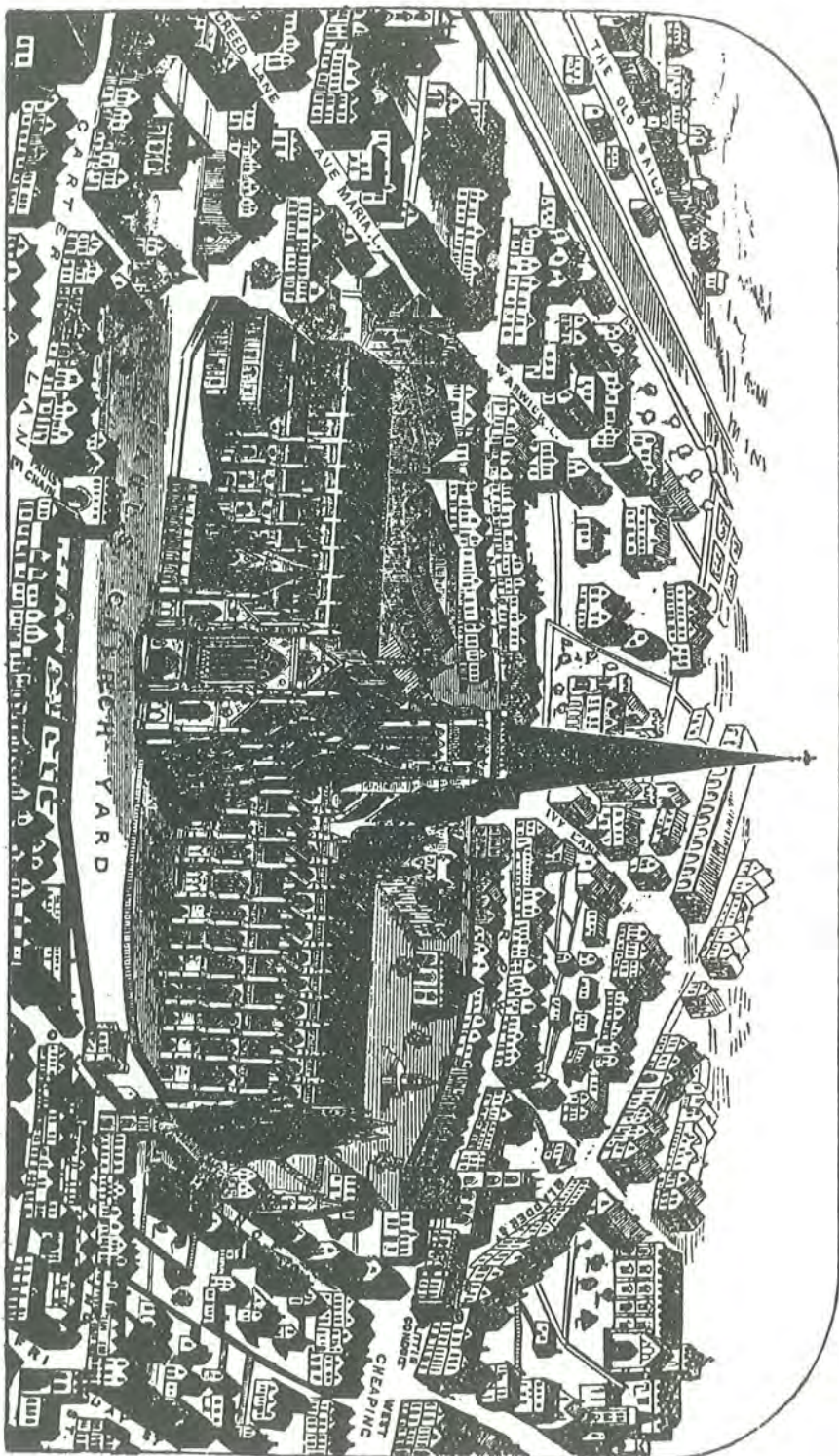
The pupil is fictitious, but the descriptions of the school, its conditions of entry, time-table etc., are well researched, with some original material eg. in an excerpt from "Precepts of Living", (Dean Colet).

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY

Empathy is possible when comparing school routine today, and certain similar lessons, and, sympathy with a new boy on his first day at a new school.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Types of Schools (St. Paul's today is one of the most famous public schools.
- 2) Teasing of new boys.



OLD ST. PAUL'S AND THE SURROUNDING STREETS

(From Chapters in the History of Old St. Paul's
by W.S. Simpson, 1881).

(As used in E. & R. Power : Boys & Girls of History.)

TITLE: A BOY KING'S WORKING DAY (A.D. 1550)

PLOT:

This is rather in the mould of 'day in the life of' and although there is action, it is routine. There is a logical sequence of happenings and the story moves from 'work' to 'play' situations, but the climax is merely the end of a tiring day.

SETTING:

In the palace of Whitehall and reference is made to the books being studied. Coverdale's Bible, Ptolemy's Geography and Sermons by Ridley, Latimer and Cranmer.

THEME:

This is merely to illustrate the life and tenuous situation held by Edward VI, with reference to the Reformation and religious persecutions.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The story is based around the young thirteen year old king, who is central to the story, whilst his advisers and friends illuminate his solitary position.

STYLE:

This is purely narrative, and the tensions of the period are clearly brought out in the King's anxiety to study, to take advice and to wield authority where necessary. His early death is anticipated by referring to his long attacks of coughing.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

All the events, references and routines are historically accurate and there is no fictitious element in this story at all. There are quotations from original letters which give authenticity.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Imagining the life of a sickly king may involve sympathy rather than empathy, but his periods of recreation can arouse empathy.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) The burden of kingship on a young boy
- 2) The nature of his illness.

TITLE: THE CHILDHOOD OF LADY JANE GREY (A.D.1537-53)

PLOT:

As the story is authentic, the plot unfolds in a logical sequence of happenings from the birth of Lady Jane Grey to her execution. The cause and effect of this is explained in relation to the times. Events build up gradually to the climax of her execution.

SETTING:

The story begins in her birth place at Bradgate, Leicestershire. Jane is described as great-niece of Henry VIII, and is sent to his court for training and grooming by ambitious parents.

THEME:

The short life and tragic death of Lady Jane Grey.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The character of Jane is revealed in the narrative and through accounts of her thoughts and feelings. She is very convincing and behaves in a manner consistent with her youth and background. As circumstances change and her parents' plans for her marriage to Prince Edward are thwarted, she develops more scholarly pursuits, and becomes resilient and philosophical.

STYLE:

This is purely narrative and very suitable reading for young children. The ambitions of those who manipulated her life are introduced in their criticism of her faults and her response by retreating into her books.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

This is brought out by the setting, and by use of period vocabulary eg. Kirtle, mountebanks, posset etc. There is a quotation from Jane's speech to Roger Ascham which is in keeping with the period.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Empathy is possible for Jane's predicament in the hands of ambitious people, and in the simple pleasures of her childhood, but sympathy is aroused when she is pushed into a marriage against her wishes.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Fickleness of the people.
- 2) Beheading of a young girl for a crime other people had forced her to commit.



TITLE: JOHN OF THE GOLDEN HIND (A.D.1577)

PLOT:

This is a good story because it describes Drake's activities and his journey round the world. It is based on historical fact and is therefore credible. The story is a logical sequence of happenings which come to a climax in the return to England and the knighting of Sir Francis.

SETTING:

The story begins and ends in England, but tells of life 'on board' ship, and of places en route. The time is indicated by reference to the Queen (therefore Elizabeth I's reign) and the chief character, John Drake, describes in detail all he observes on the ship, and the relationship between the gentlemen and mariners.

THEME:

The theme could be "Drake's Voyage" and is interesting for children but a sub-theme could be - piracy against Spain which adds an exciting dimension.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The chief character, John, is very convincing, because as a relative of Sir Francis, he becomes his page and 'reports' on the voyage, maybe with some bias towards his hero, but the 'mutinous' behaviour, and the attacks on the Spanish galleon, are experiences which mature him over his three year voyage.

STYLE:

This is straightforward narrative with some dialogue and quotations from verse. The dialogue is at exciting parts of the story eg. execution of Doughty and the sighting of the galleon. This is the author's way of introducing action.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The story follows with great accuracy Drake's voyage, with authentic names of ships and crew. The fictitious part may be in the person of John, but he too could have existed.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

The perils of the sea, the excitement of piracy and the glory of homecoming stir the imagination, and promote empathetic understanding.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Piracy and the Queen's "understanding".
- 2) Use of slaves for menial tasks.

TITLE: SALATHIEL PAVY, THE BOY ACTOR (A.D.1600)

PLOT:

This is an unusual 'history' story, but very interesting and certainly original. The basis is from Ben Jonson's "Epitaph on Salathiel Pavy" and is therefore quite credible. Action appears when the child Thomas Clifton is brought to the Chapel Royal against his will and the subsequent Star Chamber appeal to free him. The climax comes with Salathiel's death at an early age.

SETTING:

The story begins with Salathiel working as an apprentice who was 'stage struck' and visits the theatre. He imitates the actors and is 'spotted' by Nathaniel Giles and taken to the Chapel Royal to sing, dance and act in front of the Queen herself. Descriptions of the theatre and life of the Chapel Royal children are very vivid.

THEME:

The aim of the story is to describe Elizabethan theatre through the eyes of a child of the Chapel Royal, and by mentioning famous people, and places, it gives authenticity.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The chief character is revealed through descriptive narrative and when the interest/action begins, then dialogue is introduced. Nathaniel Giles of the Chapel Royal was master, and is the second character. Through him the story of Thomas Clifton is revealed. Salathiel loved the Chapel Royal and became popular and famous.

STYLE:

The style is straightforward descriptive narrative with some dialogue at points when the interest or mood of the story changes. The vocabulary of descriptions of musical instruments, farthingales worn by boys acting parts of women and period words, eg. trunk, hose, lute etc., give an Elizabethan flavour.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

Most of the information is factual and even the fictitious parts are based on fact, but this does not detract from the interest. The story is stimulated by Ben Jonson's Epitaph used as an original source, and the language is of the period.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

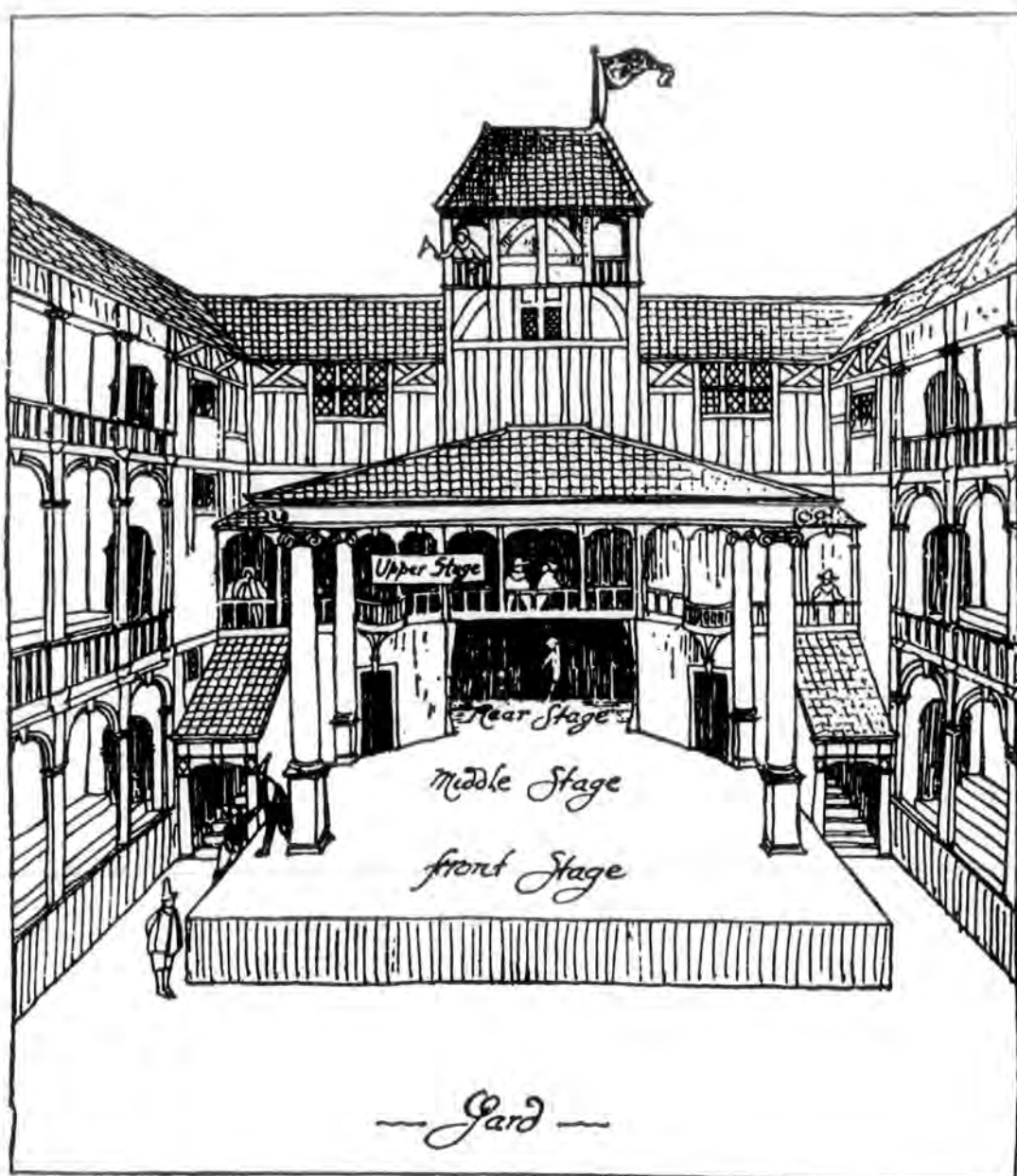
Empathy with Salathiel and even some role-play is possible when he comes back from the theatre 'stage-struck' and imitates the actors.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

1) The 'abduction' of suitable boys for service in the Chapel Royal

AN ELIZABETHAN THEATRE (reconstructed)

(As used in E. & R. Power, Boys & Girls of History)



TITLE: A LITTLE STUART HOUSEWIFE (A.D.1628)

PLOT:

There is no plot as such but there is a logical description of the daily and seasonal tasks of a mistress of the manor. This is Margaret's mother, and Margaret herself is in training for the day when she will supervise the domestic side of running a manor. All information is of interest but not particularly to young children.

SETTING:

The description takes place in and around a manor house, but there is little additional information to indicate the time beyond the first sentence and references to publications by Sir Hugh Platt and Gervaise Markham.

THEME:

The theme could be entitled "preparation of a young lady for her role as housewife in Stuart times" - not particularly worth imparting but the interest lies in the use of herbs, flavourings, vegetables and medicines all grown in the garden of the manor.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The main character is the 12 year old daughter of the manor, and her training is described in detail and through her conversations with her mother and her maid. She is convincing as an obedient daughter, consistent with the period and background, but not altogether convincing as a child.

STYLE:

This is straightforward descriptive narrative with some dialogue as the story changes direction, eg. when her mother gives her further books to read, and when they visit the sick. There is a feeling of security in undisturbed routine. Reference to words like, posset, syllabub add to the authenticity.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

This is purely social domestic history and seems fairly accurate. That the characters are fictitious does not detract from the detailed information on foods, herbs, preserving, brewing and all other domestic pursuits. Possibly the quotations from Platt and Markham indicate that research into their works stimulated the 'plot' for story in the first place.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY

Daily routine is so different from today that empathy would be difficult, but some sympathy for the poor and sick.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) The role of women and girls.
- 2) Natural remedies.

PLAN OF A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY GARDEN

(From A New Orchard and Garden, by William Lawson;
included in Gervase Markham's Extracts, 1660)

(As used in E. & R. Power, Boys & Girls of History.)

A. All these squares must be set with Trees, the Gardens and other Ornaments must stand in spaces betwixt the trees, and in the borders and fences.

B. Trees twenty yards asunder.

C. Garden Knots

D. Kitchen Garden

E. Bridge.

F. Conduit.

G. Staires.

H. Walks set with great wood thick.

I. Walks set with great wood round about your Orchard

K. The Out fence

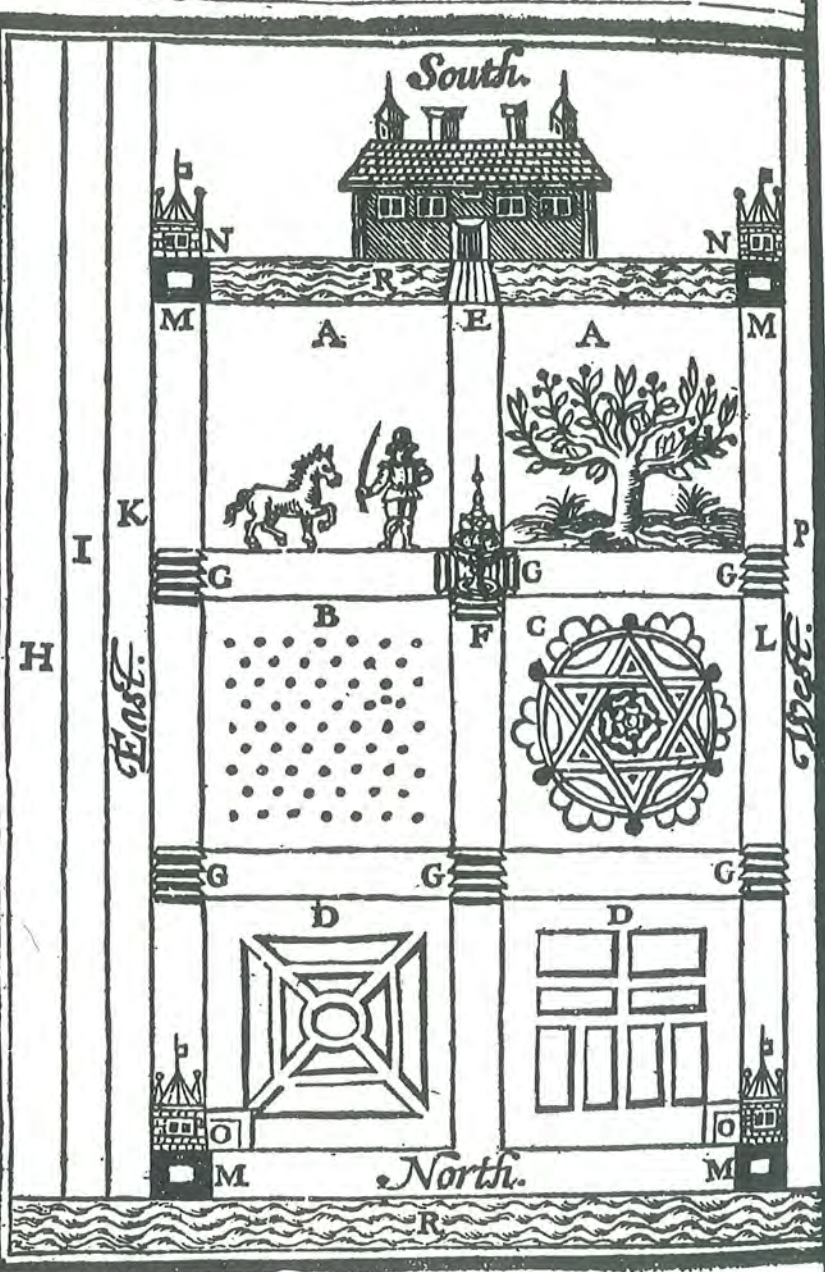
L. The Out fence set with stone-fruit.

M. Mount. To force earth for a Mount or such like, set it round with quick and lay boughes of trees strangely intermingl'd, the tops inward, with the earth in the middle

N. Still-House.

O. Good standing for Bees, if you have an house.

P. If the River run by your door, and under your Mount it will be pleasant.



TITLE: AT THE COURT OF THE GREAT MOGUL (A.D.1615-19)

PLOT:

Life at the Indian Mogul's court and the English Ambassador's attempts to persuade the Mogul to sign a treaty of friendship and to give trading concessions. The plot is based on actual activities of the East India Company and rivals, who were active in the reign of James I. The climax comes on the return to England, but it is an 'anti-climax', in that all is not achieved.

SETTING:

The story takes place at Surat the port of the East India Company and at Ajmir, where the Mogul had his court, which is the ultimate in wealth, shown by precious jewels, silks, elephants etc., owned by the Mogul and his family.

THEME:

The East India Company's attempts to trade with India.

CHARACTERIZATION:

Christopher, the page of Sir Thomas Roe, the English Ambassador is introduced through the narrative. His role is convincing and credible. Both he and Sir Thomas pick up local diseases/fevers. Christopher at first is full of awe and wonder, but after 4 years he matures sufficiently to see through the wily Mogul's delaying tactics, and he leaves India a wiser young man.

STYLE:

The style is descriptive narrative with some dialogue through instructions from Sir Thomas. From Christopher's point of view, he thinks aloud and the story moves on. Use of some Indian words eg. "Padsha Salamet!", 'Salam' create the Eastern mood.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The story is accurate in setting and descriptions. Fact probably accounts for most of the story and the quotation from Sir Thomas Roe's diary could well be authentic. The language, customs, ranks etc., are historically correct.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Empathy would be difficult because India has changed so much; page boys as such, no longer exist, although the observation of other people's riches is a possible empathetic situation.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Contrast between rich and poor.
- 2) Use of slaves.

TITLE: CARGO COMES TO OLD VIRGINIA (A.D.1664)

PLOT:

As the title indicates the story tells of the arrival of cargo to Jamestown, and the plot is the journey down-stream of a family to meet the boat, collect their letters and parcels, buy slaves and meet a family to whom they are going to give hospitality until they are able to set up themselves. All this is plausible and credible, and events are incidental. The climax comes with the arrival of the ship.

SETTING:

Reference to Cavaliers and Roundheads, indicates the Restoration period, and the description of Roundheads, followers of Cromwell, fleeing to Virginia to escape religious persecution, gives a reason for the arrival of the Page family.

THEME:

The colonization of N.America, in particular the cotton states, by the English, and their workforce of black slaves, convicts and redemptioners.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The story centres round Anne Wycherley, daughter of a tobacco plantation owner, whose parents had fled from Cromwell. She had a good relationship with her negress "nanny". She awaits the arrival of Patience, daughter of a new settler, because she does not have any white companions. When Patience arrives she assumes the hostess role, and helps to explain procedure to her friend in a mature way.

STYLE:

This is descriptive narrative which is easy to comprehend, and dialogue between Anne and 'nanny', and Anne and Patience move the story along in sequence. Serenity is attained in descriptions of the wide landscapes, joy in the friendship with the slaves, and pathos at the plight of the convicts and redemptioners.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

There is a good balance between fact and fiction, as this type of cargo frequently arrived in the new world. The characters, even if fictitious are based on fact. The dress of the settlers, their hierarchy and the eagerly awaited letters, clothing, materials etc., from the Home Country give authenticity.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY

Empathy with the child, anticipating the arrival of her friend and then explaining everything to Patience, makes the story very suitable for young children, especially when some have relatives or take holidays in the States today.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) The deportation of convicts.
- 2) People fleeing from religious persecution.
- 3) Bonding of some immigrants too poor to pay their fares
- 4) Use of negro slave labour.
- 5) Political differences between Cavaliers and Roundheads reconciled in new country.

TITLE: PESTILENCE AND FIRE (A.D.1664-6)

PLOT:

This is a good story with plenty of action, based on the tragedies of the Great Plague and Great Fire. It is credible, because the events really did take place and there is a logical sequence of happenings. A climax comes twice, when Peggy the child is taken away from her plague-ridden home, and when she has to flee her home from the fire.

SETTING:

The story takes place in London, and the street names, and the references to national affairs, eg. possibility of invasion by French and Dutch, indicate the historical period. The family lived in a very over-crowded part of London, where the plague and the fire spread quickly.

THEME:

Life in Restoration London and especially survival from the Great Plague and the Great Fire.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The narrative is set around Peggy, the daughter of a saddler, who is credible and convincing. Although too young to be given much responsibility, she nevertheless is able to assimilate what is going on around her, and realise the dangers. Some years after the fire, she visits London and enjoys the rebuilding and modernisation of a devastated city.

STYLE:

A mixture of narrative and dialogue with changes in mood, eg., despair of the plague victims, and fear of those fleeing from the fire, revealed through dialogue and vivid word-pictures of London scenes.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

Details of street scenes, description of comet sightings, enemy ships in the Thames etc., all 'date' the story with accuracy. This story is mostly fact woven into the lives of a fictitious family. Word-pictures bring to mind streets comparable to the 'Shambles' in York.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Children could empathise with the fears of Peggy and her family. A visit to a medieval city would show how narrow the streets were, and help children to imagine life in Stuart times. There is sympathy for those whose relatives and pets died in the plague.

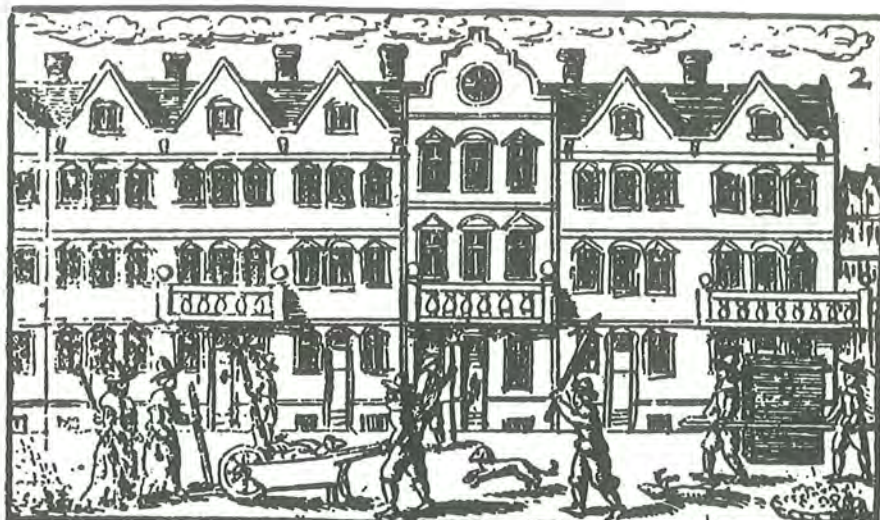
CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Health and safety in Stuart Times.
- 2) Shameless overcharging and looting.

LONDON SCENES DURING THE GREAT PLAGUE

(From a contemporary document (from The Great Plague in London in 1665, by W.C.Bell, 1924).)

(As used in E. & R. Power, Boys & Girls of History.)



John Dunstall fecit.

TITLE: MISS -- TOP - ASHISH, THE LITTLE GIANT (1688-91)

PLOT:

This story has plenty of action and the plot is plausible. It is probably based on the 'Pocohontas' story (there were indeed many such situations) where settlers ventured to join the Indians for gain, or merely out of curiosity. There is a logical sequence of happenings and the climax comes with a Victorious return to the Hudson Bay Trading Station and peace with the Indians.

SETTING:

The story is set in the interior of Canada in territory claimed by The Hudson Bay Trading Company. Fort Nelson is mentioned and the period is hinted by reference to rival French deals with the Indians. The situation affects the characters in that they are fearful and suspicious of the Indians, yet are patronizing in that they give poor returns for the pelts and skins. The main story however, rises above the trading in the hope that the 'mixed marriage' will further the cause of peace.

THEME:

The establishment of good trading relations between the Hudson Bay Company and the Indians of N.America.

CHARACTERIZATION:

Henry Kelsey is the youth, central to the story, who had come out from London as an apprentice clerk, and became intrigued with the Indian way of life. He is revealed through the narrative and the comments of some of his fellow apprentices. The minor characters are all convincing role-models, eg. Indian chief, Governor, clerks etc., and Henry's standing improves during the story from an accounts clerk, to a valuable aide to the company by building up trade with new tribes, and making peace with them.

STYLE:

This is straightforward narrative with some dialogue when necessary. Vivid descriptive passages depict the uncertain itinerant way of life of the Indian hunting-tribes and the barter list reveals the degree of rapacity of the Company.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The trading situation is consistent with many such agreements, and the marriage may be fiction based on fact, as is the fraternisation with the Indians.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Most children enjoy playing cowboys and Indians and to empathise with a boy who joined the Indians and their hunting trips, should be fairly easy with the help of modern films, bearing in mind that the 'true' Indian way of life has not changed much in 300 years. Sympathy will be for the Indians who lose out on the deals.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) The English Hudson Bay Company taking advantage of the Indians, e.g. 40 beaver skins for 1 gun.
- 2) Trade in animal skins.

TITLE: A VISIT TO STOURBRIDGE FAIR (A.D.1723)

PLOT:

The story tells of a visit of two children, Caroline and Robert, to the famous Stourbridge Fair, with Daniel Defoe. It is a good way of describing the fair and the introduction of child characters makes it appeal to children. Then all the fun of the fair is described, giving a refreshing sequence of happenings, whilst reference to Defoe's search for material for his writings gives credibility to the plot. The climax is merely the end of the day with two very tired children.

SETTING:

The story takes place in Cambridge, in the reign of George I. Reference to the pillory (and Defoe's previous imprisonment) show the customs of the age, and details of trading and entertainment are vividly described.

THEME:

This would be 'A day at the Fair' and could be of great interest to children, especially those who live in districts where the fairs or galas still exist.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The characters are introduced through the narrative and through conversation with each other. Their comments show their likes and dislikes, and reveal their difference in age and interests (eg. which side-shows appeal to Robert/Caroline). The time span is too short to show character development, other than that of having had a new experience.

STYLE:

The style is descriptive narrative, interspersed with conversation to highlight various situations eg., the procession. Vivid word-pictures describe the booths and side shows, and the excitement and terror which makes Caroline cry. Reference to the 14th century fair is by dialogue between Defoe and stall-holders; its purpose is to show that what was once mostly a trade fair was becoming an 'amusement' fair - which of course, is what has evolved today.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

References to Cambridge, the Cam, the sea ports in use at the time, give accuracy to the story and the actual offerings of trade and amusement are exactly of the period.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Empathy could easily be reached because both boys and girls have experience of fairs - hot-dogs and candy floss may have replaced the cook shops, but circus-type 'freaks', tight-rope walkers and jugglers and even may-pole dancers still abound. The atmosphere of a fair is very catching and enjoyable, and gives scope for the imagination.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Punishment by pillorying and whipping post.
- 2) Pick-pockets.

TITLE: GEORGE III VISITS ETON (A.D.1762)

PLOT:

This is fairly thin, and merely describes life at Eton College over a short period of time through the movements and sayings of John Allen, an oppidan, and his cousin Pierce, a colleger. The climax of the account comes when King George III and Queen Charlotte visit the school. There is a logical sequence of happenings but the action is slow except when the boys break bounds.

SETTING:

This is centred around the famous public school and its boarding houses, the river Thames, and the coffee houses of Windsor. The year is stated by the author and reinforced by references to Whigs/Tories in the current parliamentary situation. The school is described in detail to show the type of education available for wealthy boys, as is dress and transport.

THEME:

Education of sons of the wealthy in Georgian England, and is interesting even if only to compare with the public school education today.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The characters are revealed through the narrative and through actions and conversation with each other. Their behaviour is consistent with their backgrounds. They do not need to work hard, to stay at the school, even if they earned a shilling for getting in 'remove'. Pierce did not think it worth a ½ day's exam in case he lost his holiday. The royal visit was not so much a royal occasion, but the excuse for extra holidays.

STYLE:

This is descriptive narrative interspersed with dialogue between the two main characters and with the boarding house mistress. The mood is of 'leisured ease'. The boys do not seem to be overworked, frequent excuses for holidays, devious ways of getting round school rules, made life very pleasurable.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

There is a good balance between fact and fiction - much data, original material exists about Eton College - curriculum, time-table, dress, school-boy pranks etc. The fiction may be in the two characters, but these are both credible. Descriptions of the King's progress seem very authentic.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

As there is no rousing action, the reader may not easily empathise with a teenager from a different social group, in a setting which may be quite difficult to imagine for the school child of today.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Birching.
- 2) Privileged education for the wealthy.
- 3) Extra holidays and monetary rewards for good work.

TITLE: A SHEEP-SHEARING AT HOLKHAM (A.D.1798)

PLOT:

This is fairly weak, but there is some action and a logical sequence of happenings leading to a climax; the great 'event' of the year - the Holkham sheep-shearing. The story is of the visit of two young boys, soon to be employed on the land, to Holkham, and their reporting back to an old gaffer, too infirm to attend.

SETTING:

The story takes place in Norfolk, near Holkham and describes the farming possibilities that 'reclamation' by Thomas Coke had made possible. The time is given by the gaffer saying that there had been no 'shows' since 1778. Reference is also made to the need for food and 'Boney' fighting on the continent.

THEME:

This is the Agricultural (and Industrial) Revolution and touches also on the Enclosure Movement. It emerges naturally from the story, and does not overpower the characters.

CHARACTERIZATION:

In order to appeal to children the authors have skilfully woven a story around two lads, George and Dick who are listening to the tales of the oldest man in the village, the gaffer. Through convincing conversation he describes the changes in farming, and when the boys leave him to go to the show, narrative takes over. The gaffer reminisces (as old people do), and the boys who at first are rather impudent, saying "He's off", are quite happy to learn from his experiences.

STYLE:

The dialogue is typical of an old farmer, using metaphors with countryside associations and local language. The narrative is straightforward with vivid descriptive passages and a feeling of security and hope emanates from the success of farming practices - great yields, fatter cattle and interested visitors.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

There is no doubt about the authenticity of Thomas Coke, of Holkham and his transformation of the farming scene. Original source material would record the statistics for the country fair - the fictitious characters being the observers, George and Dick, thereby creating a good balance.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

The enthusiasm of George and Dick is infectious, and although the story is slow, the descriptions are vivid and the boys' excitement is intense. Children could imagine the atmosphere, and may reach an empathetic understanding of their pleasure.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Benefits of new farming.
- 2) Full employment.
- 3) No poor-house needed.

TITLE: LITTLE SLAVES OF INDUSTRY (A.D.1800)

PLOT:

This is a gripping story with plenty of action, and although the plot is not original, it is plausible and credible. There is a logical sequence of happenings. Poverty and loss of jobs compel the parents of Jim to apprentice him to a chimney sweep. The climax comes with Jim's death by choking on soot.

SETTING:

The story takes place in one of the mill towns where, following the impact of the Industrial Revolution, children were employed as cheap labour. The factory work was hard, and the overseers demanded value for money. The beatings and thrashings were universal, and wages were grudging. Worse than this was the fate of the chimney sweep, and this is vividly described.

THEME:

Child labour in the factories, mines and chimneys of the great industrial towns.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The characters are revealed through conversation between Jim, and other members of his family. His mother has the dominant role in the family, trying to urge the others to hold on to their jobs while she looks after the baby at home. All members of the family, and friends are convincing and behave in a manner consistent with their backgrounds. Jim is to be pitied as he is apprenticed at six, to a dreadful job, because of the poverty endured by the whole family.

STYLE:

There is a good balance between descriptive narrative, and dialogue. Conversations between the main characters create the impression of despair and severe conditions of deprivation. To intensify the meaning the authors describe the punishments and hardships endured by children of such tender years.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

That such situations did exist, is without doubt. There were thousands of 'Jims' in the chimneys and thousands of Anns and Jennies in the mills, so that the facts are true, although the characters may be fictitious. The conversations are solely concerned with work and making ends meet, and therefore typical working-class language

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY

There are numerous situations where children could empathise with the characters in their employment, and even putting oneself in the position of the mother. Comparisons could be made with the children's classic "Tom and the Water Babies", stimulating the imagination and leading to sympathetic understanding.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Child labour in the mines and factories
- 2) Corporal punishment
- 3) Child abuse.
- 4) Cruelty to children.
- 5) Minimum age of employment

TITLE: ON BOARD THE VICTORY (AD.1803-5)

PLOT:

This story is full of action and tells of the events leading up to the Battle of Trafalgar, through the eyes of a young midshipman called Johnnie Newcome. There is a logical series of happenings building up to the climax of the Battle, including descriptions of the ship, its crew, their duties and preparations for sea.

SETTING:

The story takes place wholly at sea, and always in pursuit of the French and Spaniards. An abortive chase to the West Indies adds to the excitement and action, and intimates that the great Nelson is not infallible.

THEME:

The theme is "The Battle of Trafalgar" and should be of great interest to children, as one of the great turning points in British History, so much so, that it is still commemorated in Trafalgar Day (maybe a good time to tell the story).

CHARACTERIZATION:

The young 'middy' is revealed through the narrative, and his thoughts, impressions and fears make the story convincing and credible. His jobs on board ship emphasize his lowly position, but he was only 12 years old and therefore, had much to learn. Experience, of course, is the great teacher, and after surviving the battle, he walked with the other sailors in Nelson's funeral procession, now wiser and more experienced.

STYLE:

The style is descriptive narrative, with little dialogue. This tends to create a mood of urgency and tension - no time to be wasted on words - all hands on deck - each to his own job. Vivid word-pictures with appropriate nautical terms, help to intensify the meaning.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The factual details, including the 'chase' to the West Indies are historically correct, and the characters could be fictitious, but this does not matter. Shanty songs sung by the crews are original. A description of the death of Nelson, and types of ships helps to build up the historical accuracy.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

The description of the boy's uniform and duties, his bouts of sea-sickness, and his fears in battle arouse empathy, whilst the funeral of a famous person would evoke sympathy among readers.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Press-gangs
- 2) The horrors of close combat fighting.

TITLE: THE FIRST RAILWAY JOURNEY A.D.1830

PLOT:

This is a rivetting story with lots of action, and a plausible credible plot. Preparations for the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway are described and there is an identifiable climax in the actual opening, with an anti-climax in the accident, when Huskisson is killed on the railway.

SETTING:

The story takes place initially in a house, not far from the new railway and the time is alluded to, by the incident and by other famous persons, eg. Stephenson the engineer, Peel, the Duke of Wellington and Huskisson, who came to witness the opening.

THEME:

The theme is the construction and opening of the first Passenger railway, and is informative and exciting for children. The story of the two boys' involvement makes a story out of the historical occasion.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The characters are revealed through conversation between the two boys. Willy, the stay-at-home is over-ridden by Ned who has travelled by stage-coach and barge to London, Birmingham and Liverpool, and boasts of it. Willy sees his opportunity when he takes Ned to see George Stephenson who bids him climb aboard. Now Willy is supreme; but Stephenson invites Ned to climb up too and the boys have a marvellous ride. Granny represents the doubters, who are worried at the arrival of 'Iron Horses' and predicts "unnatural, I call it! unnatural".

STYLE:

The style is descriptive narrative with a good balance of dialogue. The excitement is created by the description of the speed of the train, compared with the old horse, Dobbin, and the uncertainty of Granny by her preposterous ideas about the uses of steam. Local colour is employed in the explanation of the workings of the engine, and the construction of the line over Chat Moss.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The story is based on historical fact, the fictitious elements are the boys. Details of the amount of earth-moving, speeds etc., must be from original records; the names of the engines certainly are true, as some may be seen in museums today.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY

The excitement of a train journey would help to stimulate the imagination, as well as a visit to Beamish Museum (Locomotion No.1) and York Railway Museum. There is much supporting source material, paintings etc., which would help children to empathise with the two boys.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

1) Trespass on railways.

TITLE: QUEEN VICTORIA'S CHILDHOOD (A.D.1819-37)

PLOT:

This is a good story especially when there are so many books around today on the childhood of members of the Royal Family. The appeal lies in its credibility as Victoria was such a famous monarch. The events are described chronologically although emphasis is laid on the fact that her upbringing was very austere. The climax comes when William IV dies, and the young girl becomes Queen of England.

SETTING:

The story takes place largely within the confines of Kensington Palace, with holidays at Claremont and a visit to Windsor. Little is told about the buildings, but more about the people who surrounded Victoria, and who trained her for her future role; her teachers, governess, chaplains and her mother.

THEME:

As the title suggests the story is about Victoria's childhood but it could equally be called "Victoria's preparation for monarchy", because from the day she was born she was closely supervised by her mother.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The child's character is revealed through the narrative, and in conversation with her governess, half-sister, and through her letters to Uncle Leopold, and her diaries. Her strengths and weaknesses (eg. early tantrums) are described, and her whole training programme is to overcome any traits of weakness. On the morning of her accession her dignified acceptance would indicate that it had been successful.

STYLE:

The style of writing is natural, easy-flowing narrative with a good balance between dialogue and description. Her "royalness" is enhanced by the number of servants around her, allusions to other kings, princes and princesses who were her cousins, and by her examination by the Bishops.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

There is no doubting the accuracy of the story, as many books, films and documentaries have been made. The story is wholly factual, even the minor characters and minor episodes.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Empathy could be aroused if one could imagine a lonely child, often playing alone and being taught alone. The keeping of journals (scrap-books) and diaries could help children to imagine this as a popular occupation, and the pleasures of visits to cousins would also evoke sympathetic understanding of her solitary childhood.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

1) Preparation for monarchy.

The Powers went on to write two further books of short historical stories in the same vein, entitled More Boys and Girls of History, Book One and Book Two (1929), with the first book covering events from 1497 to 1610, and the second from 1618 to 1871. These Books are covering the same period as the Boys and Girls of History, although bringing their writing more up to date. However, they are clearly seen to be complementary to the first, although to be read in sequence, since the style and language used, is slightly more advanced. No doubt they were considered suitable for slightly older and more able readers.

As against Boys and Girls of History, the stories tend to be slightly longer, written in more depth and also include more foreign history. As Rhoda and Eileen Power state in their preface :

'This time we have tried in the main to illustrate the history of discovery and the growth of "Greater Britain", and our stories all belong to the period subsequent to the middle ages. If they claim any originality, it lies in the fact that we have tried to see the events described, not only through the eyes of the adventuring or conquering English, but through those of the little Irish girl, the Red Indian princess, or the chief's son of Kandy, the Burmese, the Maori and the Australian "Black fellow", and have attempted to describe their daily lives.' (1)

So basically, the events covered are the history of England overseas. Again, the Powers emphasise the point that their stories are not meant to be taken as history in its own right, but are to be used alongside text-books of history, to which their stories provide a background and greater insight into the period studied - and in most cases a good one at that. Many are worthy of use in schools.

1) Power and Power, preface.

Titles included in More Boys and Girls of History,
(C.U.P. 1928)

BOOK 1:

- 1) The Bristol Apprentice
- 2) The Childhood of Mary Queen of Scots
- 3) The Voyage of the 'Bonaventure'
- 4) Your Honour's Slave
- 5) The Eagle of the North
- 6) Pocohontas, the Little Tomboy
- 7) Martin on the Isle of Devils
- 8) Nick and the Mutineers

BOOK 2:

- 1) Meg's Story
- 2) From Christ's Hospital to Surat
- 3) The Strange White Bird
- 4) The Boston Tea Party
- 5) Muradhana of Kandy
- 6) The Emigrants' Journey
- 7) In the Blackfellows' Camp
- 8) News in Ujiji

At the end of these two books the Powers have added questions and exercises based on the stories in order to increase the understanding of the facts, and the comprehension of the text, as well as to suggest some ways in which the stories may be used in schools.

There is also an addendum, where the authors list books which have been of use to them in finding out the relevant historical information, before writing their stories.

CASE-STUDY 2:

Rhoda Power, We Were There, (G.Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1955)

CONTENTS:

- 1) From the Fury of the Northmen...
- 2) They Called Me a Scold
- 3) The Pilgrimage
- 4) Brother Francis Sent Us
- 5) Sanctuary
- 6) The Surrender of Calais
- 7) The Peasants' Revolt
- 8) The Devil's Workshop
- 9) The Nine Days' Queen
- 10) Adventure on London Bridge
- 11) The Spanish Armada

This is a book of stories, told by imaginary eye-witnesses which 'spring from historical sources but make no attempt to reproduce the language of the period except where quotations from letters or from other documents are used.'⁽¹⁾ Accompanying the stories in this book Rhoda Power's preceding paragraphs of historical explanation are usually very vivid descriptions at a level of understanding for young readers. Sometimes they are too simplistic, but the fact that she attempts this at all, enables her in her historical writing to concentrate more on fictional aspects, mingled with history, without having to alter the fluid style and language both of her writing and the plot. This gives the necessary background and explanations of historical accuracies, in order to enable the reader to follow the story.

1) Power, Preface.

TITLE: FROM THE FURY OF THE NORTHMEN...

PLOT:

The story tells of a Danish Viking raid on an Anglo-Saxon monastery, the desecration and burning of the building, the flight of the occupants and the capture of the young 'novice', Turgar. He sees his opportunity to escape, and returns to rebuild the monastery and its life.

SETTING:

The Abbey is Croyland (Crowland) whose ruins are in the fens, and there are vivid descriptions of the countryside - rivers, waterways, marshes, sedges, reed-cutting etc., the occupations of the monks, and the routine of the Abbey.

THEME:

Viking raids have been especially interesting to children since the opening of Jorvik and the theme of war and pillage is usually enjoyed by young children, especially when there are such colourful images of dragon-ships, axes, horned helmets etc.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The chief character, Turgar, is revealed through the story as an occupant of the monastery. He is different from the other children because he has memories of a previous raid and as an orphan at 4 years old may have been left behind by the raiders. For a boy of 10 he is a strong character, and plays an important role in the evacuation of the monastery and the hiding of its treasures. He is even more to be admired when he makes his escape and returns to Crowland.

STYLE:

The style is descriptive narrative with dialogue at important points eg., when the Abbot prays for deliverance, when Turgar is captured, and his exchanges with his Danish captor, Jarl Sidroc Sidrocsson. The mood changes from apprehension and fear to joyful rebuilding.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The story of the raid describes one of hundreds of such raids on Abbeys, Cathedrals, Churches where most of the wealth lay in plate and manuscripts. Crowland was subjected to raids, and there are no obvious anachronisms.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Children could identify with Turgar, and imagine his fears when he was captured by the enemy. The excitement of his escape and hiding until safe is so vividly described as to evoke empathetic understanding.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Lack of regard by the raiders for property and people.
- 2) Even church property is not sacrosanct.

TITLE: THEY CALLED ME A SCOLD

PLOT:

The story describes a common medieval punishment of "ducking" of scolds. It is an amusing domestic row which becomes a village issue. There is a logical sequence of happenings leading to the climax which is credible to children who have seen models and replicas of ducking stools.

SETTING:

The incident takes place in a medieval village and the references to the customs, obligations and judiciary are included as supplementary material to the incident described.

THEME:

This is perhaps, 'Scene from a medieval village' and the fact that it was humorous would appeal to children.

CHARACTERIZATION:

Agnes is a convincing, domineering, bossy wife whose monologue tells lots of interesting details, as well as convincing the reader that she is a strong-minded woman, - almost a medieval candidate for 'women's lib.'.

STYLE:

The style is straightforward and descriptive, with most of the incidents told in the monologue. The mood is humorous. Even the scold is unabashed, giving lots of comments and asides at other proceedings of the court.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The ducking of scolds (and witches) was commonplace in medieval villages and the detail of the manor court proceedings are accurate. The use of words eg. melchet, heriot, cutpurse etc., help to reinforce this.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Here is a story of a married woman, not of a child. Nevertheless the 'punishment' could be easily appreciated by children of today who are familiar with all the 'duckings' in the leisure pools. They should not feel outrage or sympathy with Agnes, but would empathise with the 'ducking' in a humorous way.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Outrageous fiscal dues, eg. on a daughter's marriage etc.
- 2) Inappropriate punishments.

TITLE: THE PILGRIMAGE

PLOT:

The story tells of a boy's pilgrimage to Canterbury in the Middle Ages. The story is credible and describes a logical sequence of happenings with a climax when the boy arrives at the tomb of St. Thomas a'Becket, (reputed to have miraculous powers).

SETTING:

The story takes place in the boy's home and then his church, from which the pilgrims set out. The journey is vividly described as is the emotional arrival at Canterbury. Finally, the boy's return is rewarded with the apparent cure of his mother.

THEME:

This describes a typical pilgrimage, the various characters among the pilgrims and those who are met on the way.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The narrative is described by the chief character, Robin, who is convincing as a boy of 10 years old, worried about his mother's illness. At first he is overawed by the rituals, but after he had visited the shrine, he becomes much more serious and convinced that sacrifices are necessary. One feels that he will be a convert for ever and in this respect there has been character growth.

STYLE:

The story is descriptive narrative, and told through Robin, the chief character, with dialogue at points where the story moves on. The story is full of hope, with references to other cures, and other pilgrimages, even though the board and lodging en route was not adequate. The descriptions of Catholic practices gives a richness to the imagery.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

This pilgrimage coincided with the translation of the bones of Thomas a'Becket from the crypt to the chapel of the Blessed Trinity in 1220, so that there is a good balance between fact and fiction.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

A child used to attending church, would empathise more easily than one who doesn't, but most children would wish to do something positive if their mother was ill, and, as there were no hospitals; cures were sought at shrines. The poignancy of the story would lend itself to empathetic understanding.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

1) Monastic wealth gained from 'supposed' cures.

TITLE: BROTHER FRANCIS SENT US

PLOT:

The story tells of the first visit and settlement of the Franciscans in Britain in the thirteenth century. There is a description of St. Francis, and of the reminiscences of one of the 9 friars who worked among the poor and sick. The story tells of their crossing to Dover and their journey on foot to Canterbury.

SETTING:

The events take place in S.E.England, but there is little local colour. Their 'overnight' imprisonment could have been anywhere.

THEME:

The arrival of the Franciscans, 1224

CHARACTERIZATION:

Although the story is told through one of the monks he does not dominate the story, maybe to illustrate that all the monks had equal status. The monks are convincing through their actions and through their acceptance of adversity, and joy in their release. Although saddened at the news of St.Francis' death, they pray to God for him and accept His will.

STYLE:

There is a good balance between descriptive narrative and appropriate dialogue. The mood is optimistic and the serenity of the 'order' is captured through the language and vocabulary.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

Besides references to the towns and the work of the Franciscans there is little in the narrative to support authenticity. Certainly, when the Franciscans came to Britain, they settled in Canterbury. There were 9 of them, and 5 remained in Canterbury whilst the others established cells in Oxford and London.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY

This would be difficult for children, because the characters are adults and because the life of a monk may be hard to imagine. The issue of death of a loved one could invoke empathetic understanding.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

1) Attitudes to the sick (eg. lepers).

TITLE: SANCTUARY

PLOT:

This is a story with plenty of action, when a carpenter kills a work-mate and has to seek the protection of the Church. It is plausible and the events progress logically with a climax in the trial. Probably more suited to older children.

SETTING:

The story takes place in a medieval village and reference is made to the Lord of the Manor and the Abbot of the Priory. The murderer stands in awe of both.

THEME:

The protection of sanctuary.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The chief character is the murderer - a joiner who narrates the story. Through his thoughts and actions he makes the story convincing and credible. From a state of utter panic when the deed is committed he begins to repent. He seeks sanctuary and eventually opts for exile.

STYLE:

The story flows easily and there are descriptive passages with dialogue which emphasizes the urgency of the situation.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The right of sanctuary for grave offences existed for 1,000 years. Although this episode may have been fictitious, it is based on the story of the shoemaker which took place about 1240 (confirmed in the preface).

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY

Although the main character is a murderer, the children can empathise to some extent with the fugitive, because they love a 'chase' in films and television. There is some sympathy, because he volunteered to take the punishment of exile.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Punishments for murder.
- 2) The role of the church in law and order.

TITLE: THE SURRENDER OF CALAIS

PLOT:

This is the story of the capture of Calais in 1347 ending the Hundred years' war between France and England. It is told by one of the Burghers who was to be surrendered to the King when the siege was lifted. It is a rivetting, credible episode, building up to a climax when the King of England declares his intention to behead the burghers.

SETTING:

Calais is described - the town, the drawbridge, the famine and the starving people, with the splendid camp of the English King outside the walls, as a contrast.

THEME:

The capture of a walled town to end a century of strife between France and England.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The story is narrated by one of the burghers, Eustace de St.Pierre, who describes the effects of famine. There is dialogue when the action changes, and as the first volunteer to surrender to the English King, Eustace gives a convincing example of a leading citizen. The humanitarian influence of a wife (Queen Philippa) over her husband, King Edward, saves the burghers' lives.

STYLE:

The style is a good mixture of narrative and dialogue, with the dialogue being introduced in moments of stress and despair. The overall impression of fear is achieved by vivid descriptions of the victims of famine and the contrasting military strength of the English forces.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The story of the surrender of Calais makes popular reading, and was probably written by using the original source material of the Chronicles of Froissart. The descriptions of the weaponry promote authenticity.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY

Medieval warfare using bows and arrows, scaling ladders and mangonels fires imagination and empathy can be achieved with the losers and the victors.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) The sufferings of ordinary citizens in war.
- 2) Queen Philippa's intervention.

TITLE: THE PEASANTS' REVOLT

PLOT:

This is an account of the Peasants' Revolt narrated by one of the rebels. He describes the zeal of John Ball, his imprisonment, and release by the rebels, and the leadership of Wat Tyler. The restless peasants march on London and demand to see the King to present their grievances. Wat Tyler is killed and the mob who at first trusted the King, now find themselves leaderless, misunderstood and betrayed.

SETTING:

The major part of the story takes place in London at the Tower and at Smithfields.

THEME:

The search for justice by the peasants.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The narrator, who does not have a name, is subordinate to John Ball, the religious leader and Wat Tyler, the leader of the rebels. The character of the King is faithfully portrayed, as he promises to help the peasants, but dare not displease his nobles.

STYLE:

This is a narrative account of events told in the first person with reported dialogue of the chief characters. It is in an old-fashioned style of "the lords shall be no more..." and "how ill they behave us.." which helps to create the atmosphere.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

This is faithfully adhered to, as these events did take place. Perhaps not all the underlying causes of the Peasants' Revolt have been described, but at least there are enough to substantiate the action.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Even if all the grievances are not totally understood by children of primary age, the imagining of the 'Home Counties' peasants marching on London may evoke excitement and adventure. Sympathy is felt for the men who lose their leaders and are betrayed.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Low wages.
- 2) Poll Tax.
- 3) The differences between the rich and poor.
- 4) Religious differences.

TITLE: THE DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

PLOT:

This is an account of the skills of a scribe and his horror when he visits Caxton's printing press, and feels threatened by the speed and clarity of the product. Thomas Scrivener tells the story of himself - the scribe.

SETTING:

This is mostly in the household of a scribe to whom Thomas is apprenticed. Then he describes his work in the scriptorium of a monastery, until the day he visits the 'Sign of the Red Pole' where the printing press is housed.

THEME:

The advent of the printing press and the consequent anxieties of scribes.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The chief character is Thomas, who through his work describes his colleagues, Henry the notary, John the paginator and Martin the illuminator, and admires their skills. He is determined to work hard and emulate their devotion to their tasks, but when he returns to a task at Westminster Abbey, he finds that the almonry has been taken over by Caxton's press. At first he is annoyed, and then humbled, for he realises that progress cannot be halted.

STYLE:

The style is old fashioned, with "by your leave" and "prithee" which gives a 'Middle Ages' flavour. There are detailed descriptive passages with dialogue when the action takes place. The attention to detail, and correct vocabulary makes interesting reading.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The descriptions of the training of the apprentice and the work of the scribes in the monastery are faithfully recounted. Caxton, however, did set up the first printing press in Westminster. It was viewed with horror and suspicion but soon printing presses took over the reproduction and printing of books.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY

The detailed narrative gives vivid word-pictures of the scribe's work and children could even imitate their work for empathetic understanding. Sympathy must be felt for Thomas who feels his source of livelihood threatened.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Mechanisation.
- 2) Unemployment.
- 3) Decline of manuscript and illuminating skills.

TITLE: THE NINE DAYS' QUEEN

PLOT:

This is a factual account of the last 9 days of Lady Jane Grey when she is proclaimed Queen of England by the powerful Dukes of Suffolk and Northumberland - supporters of the Protestant cause, against Mary Tudor, the rightful heir. This is a faithful logical sequence of events told by the Lieutenant of the Tower.

SETTING:

The story takes place in the confines of the Tower which has state apartments, as well as being a prison. Jane was proclaimed Queen in the Tower, but never crowned.

THEME:

The attempt of the Protestants to put this candidate on the throne of England, in place of the rightful Roman Catholic Queen, Mary Tudor.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The storyteller is Master Brydges, the Lieutenant, but he merely narrates the events. Lady Jane's character is revealed through the narrative, and her actions. Although only 17 years old she realises that she is being 'used', and she behaves with maturity - when she refuses to try on the crown, - and with dignity at her execution. She is a sad character, because she had enjoyed a quiet life. In fact, when the plot fails, she wants to go home, but she had to suffer for the manoeuvrings of ambitious relatives.

STYLE:

The style is vivid descriptive with much attention to detail, and some of the speeches of Lady Jane, Northumberland and Suffolk seem so authentic, as to be from original documents. They are totally in keeping with the characters. The handing over of the prayer book, and the groping for the block, intensify the feeling at the execution, but again these may be from original accounts.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

This is a faithful portrayal of an historic event, which is mostly fact, with little episodes eg. the pillorying of the pot boy, which may have been fictitious, but were also credible and add to the suspense.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

This story certainly stirs the imagination of children. Here is a beautiful young lady about to be crowned Queen - suddenly it all goes wrong; sympathy may be felt for the way Jane has been used. She did not want to be Queen because she knew the crown was not hers. She has to suffer for the misdeeds of others and in so doing, may evoke empathy.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Execution.
- 2) Other Punishments.
- 3) Religious issues.

TITLE: ADVENTURE ON LONDON BRIDGE**PLOT:**

This is the story of the apprentice, Edward (Ned), saving the life of his master's child, and becoming such a favourite, that he gains her hand in marriage when she grows up. It is a 'Dick Whittington' type story, and although there is a great deal of description of trading on the river (and bridge) when the plot unfolds it is convincing. Edward himself tells the story.

SETTING:

The story takes place near London Bridge, where trade is brisk, not only on the river, but with all kinds of herbs, toys, baubles etc. The time is Elizabethan, but this is not definitely named, although from the state of the streets and 'smells' it could be Tudor/Stuart, and in this case the story transcends the setting.

THEME:

A child's life is saved on the busy River Thames.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The characters are revealed through narration and through conversation. Ned is the chief character. He is diligent, hard working and eager to 'get on'. He is also caring, and has time to humour his master's child. After his spectacular rescue, his status in the household changes and his confidence grows. Bet the maid, Anne the child and Sir William Howitt, the master, complement the chief character.

STYLE:

The style presents a good balance between narrative and dialogue when the action changes. There are original rhymes and jingles which enhance the 'period', and contribute to the mood of busy activity.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

We are told, that the story is taken from the 'Survey of London' 1598, by John Stow, so that it must be accurate. Obviously this type of incident lends itself to fiction, and in this case, the details are in keeping with the period.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY

The long introduction to the action, describing the activity on London Bridge gives interesting word-pictures, and sympathy with Bet the maid who has to do the housework, and look after a lively two-year-old; many children have 'naughty little sisters'. But the real drama is in the rescue while Ned hangs on to the drowning child, which must stir the imagination.

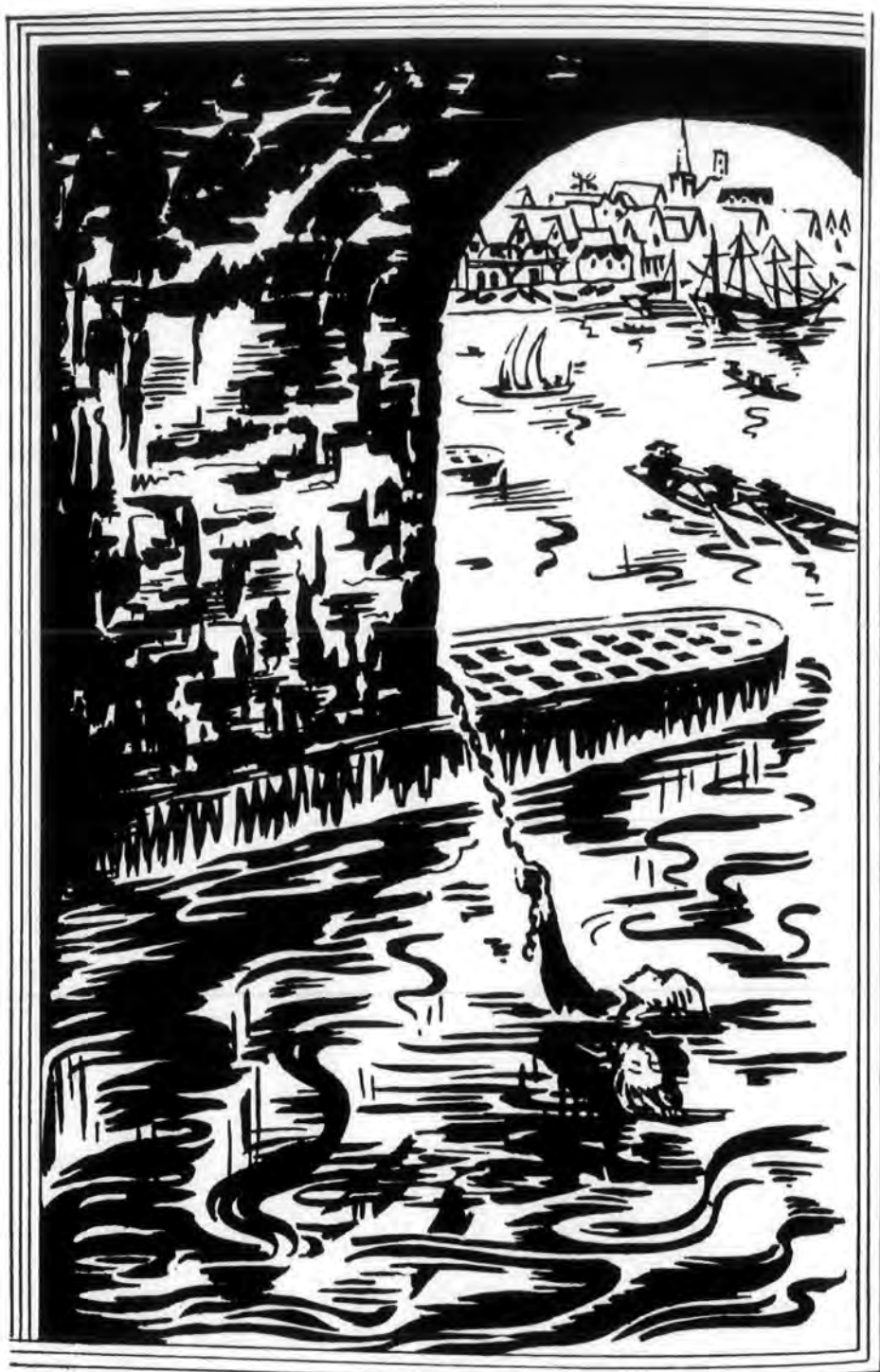
CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Heads of traitors on London Bridge.
- 2) The smells and state of the streets.
- 3) Teasing and bullying.

ADVENTURE ON LONDON BRIDGE

'I clung with one hand to an iron chain'.

(Illustrated by Charl as used in R.Power,
We Were There.)



TITLE: THE SPANISH ARMADA

PLOT:

The story of the conquest of the Spanish Armada by the English under Drake and Hawkins. This is pure reporting of a historical event by an old mariner, who because he lost an arm in the fight, is now reduced to begging.

SETTING:

This episode takes place in a street, where a group of young gentlemen are confronted by an old sailor who recounts the story of the Armada, including the famous scene on Plymouth Hoe where Drake finishes his game of bowls before setting sail. The encounter takes place off Calais, and then the Spaniards are dispersed. Reference is made to the greeting by Queen Elizabeth at Tilbury.

THEME:

The Conquest of Spain - Spanish Armada 1588.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The mariner who tells the story is convincing because through him the horrors of fighting, bloodshed and hunger can be appreciated. But his loyalty, enthusiasm and admiration for Drake (who did not command the fleet) enhances the character of Drake. All the well-known details are included, and with his victory, his seamen are full of adulation - as is the Queen, who personally greets him at Tilbury.

STYLE:

The narrative flows easily and contains all the details of preparation, and the frustrations experienced. Ballads and litanies of the period are quoted, and the language of the seamen stirs the imagination, eg. "laden with faggots, and one barrel of tar apiece..." This helps to intensify the mood.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The story historically is accurate. Research from original sources would also give details of supplies, casualties etc. The Spaniards certainly called Drake 'El Draque, the dragon', and the Dutch did strike a medal as a thanks-giving.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

It is not difficult to sympathise with the armless mariner, who has fallen on hard times. The accuracy of detail in his descriptions, soon stirs the imagination. A fight at sea (often re-enacted in films) would evoke some empathetic feeling toward Drake, and with the mariner.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) A wounded mariner reduced to begging.
- 2) Factors contributing to the English 'victory'.

CASE-STUDY 3:

Rhoda Power, We Too Were There (More Stories from History),
(George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1956).

Contents:

- 1) Vermuyden and the Fen-slodgers.
- 2) Hide and Seek.
- 3) Henry Morgan, Buccaneer.
- 4) Dame Alice Lisle.
- 5) What's the Rhyme for Porringer?
- 6) I'se a Po'Blind Negro.
- 7) A Visitor Comes to Newgate.
- 8) Mrs. Grimes's Livestock.
- 9) The Tolpuddle Martyrs.
- 10) The Great Trek.

This book is a continuation from We Were There which covered events from the tenth to the sixteenth century. In this second book 'the stories deal with events in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All are from the history of England and each is told by an imaginary eye-witness and based on contemporary material and on modern biographies'.⁽¹⁾

Yet again, a paragraph prefacing each chapter sets the historical background and scene, for the events to follow.

1) Power, Preface.

TITLE: VERMUYDEN AND THE FEN-SLODGERS

PLOT:

This is a story based on the draining of the Fens. The plot is credible, and there is plenty of action with a logical sequence of happenings. The climax comes when the drained area is flooded by saboteurs.

SETTING:

This takes place in the Fens and is being supervised by the Earl of Bedford. The introduction to the story tells us that it was in the seventeenth century. The land is very flat, and marshy and the people suffer from 'damp-related' diseases. They resist the drainage because it will deprive them of their living from marsh birds and eels.

THEME:

Opposition to the drainage of the fens.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The story is told by a young girl who is a daughter of one of the saboteurs. It is a reported narrative of the background leading up to the events, and the behaviour of the fen-slodgers (saboteurs) is consistent with their background and age. Younger men may have accepted change more readily. One feels that the young girl appreciated this, and there was therefore some character development.

STYLE:

This is descriptive narrative interspersed with dialogue when the plans for draining, and the plans for flooding are discussed. Gloom is communicated by the fen-slodgers meeting in a shack in the middle of the marsh to formulate their plan, surrounded by oozing mud and swirling mists.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The fens were drained in the seventeenth century by order of Parliament and supervised by the Earl of Bedford - one rich agricultural area is known as the Bedford Level. In order to carry this out Cornelius Vermuyden, a Dutch engineer was called in because of his expertise in reclamation in Holland. In some of the dialogue the word 'haf' is used instead of 'have' which adds to the authenticity.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

One can sympathise with the fen-slodgers, who feared they would lose their livelihood, but when one imagines their bleak existence it seems they were foolish.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) People deprived of their livelihood.
- 2) Conservation - birds deprived of natural habitat.

TITLE: HIDE AND SEEK

PLOT:

This is the story of the escape of James, Duke of York (later James II) from England during the time of his father's imprisonment. It is a plausible and credible action when he and his sister pretend to play 'hide and seek' to foil their gaolers. Events follow on to a climax, when the boy reaches the Dutch vessel moored in the Thames estuary.

SETTING:

The captivity is in St. James's Palace, where the boy and his sister play hide and seek in the grounds. They are under the watch of the Earl of Northumberland, but the escape is organised by Colonel Bampfild who tells the story.

THEME:

The escape of the young Prince James to exile.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The characters are introduced through the narrative with the focus on Prince James. The barge-master is revealed through dialogue with the Prince and Bampfild, and although apprehensive when he finds out who his passengers are, he rises to the occasion. Minor characters are revealed through narration and conversation.

STYLE:

The style is appropriate to the subject, with a good balance between narrative and dialogue. When the moments of tension arise, there are short questions and answers.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

James did escape to Holland during his father's captivity and although the minor characters may be fictitious, the plot is authentic. The game of 'Hide and Seek' - a ploy to the captors - maybe a fictitious invention, and if so, is very acceptable.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY

Most children can imagine a game of hide and seek and could empathise with the prince and sympathise with his enforced captivity. Vivid descriptions create the atmosphere.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Young children in captivity.
- 2) Children suffering because of their parents' position.

TITLE: HENRY MORGAN, BUCCANEER

PLOT:

The story is intriguing and credible, but the way it is told is rather difficult for children, as three different 'ghosts' tell their version. The plot is certainly original. The sequence of happenings reaches the climax in the capture of the pirates. The saying "send a thief to catch a thief" sums up the aim of the story.

SETTING:

The first part of the story describes Morgan's phoney trial and his promotion to Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica. The setting switches to Jamaica when he entertains the pirates. The final episode is described by the old negro. The descriptions of Jamaica are vivid and full of local colour.

THEME:

Piracy on the high seas. 'Send a thief to catch a thief'.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The characters are revealed through the story and action. The principal character is Henry Morgan whose deeds show him to be a ruthless opportunist. He forgets his former indiscretions, and murders the crew of a pirate ship who were not doing any harm, thus showing himself as unprincipled. But even after death he was buried near the gallows and his grave slipped into the sea in a subsequent earthquake - justice had been done.

STYLE:

This is difficult for young children, although the narrative is balanced with dialogue. The change of language from the courtier, to the victim, and the old negro is well done, with 'negro' English to intensify the meaning. The situations are vividly described and the moods change with the change of narrator.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The story is authentic in that Henry Morgan was a buccaneer who became Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica. He was a devious character who is said to have treated other pirates with brutality. The pirate crew may have been fictitious but it makes for a good story.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

The children could try to imagine a pirate ship and the plundering, but empathy would be difficult. Sympathy for those who were tricked is possible.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Piracy.
- 2) Fair play.

TITLE: DAME ALICE LISLE

PLOT:

This is a story full of action and with a credible plot, because it is based on true facts. There is a logical sequence of events which build up to the climax in the execution of Dame Alice Lisle for harbouring Protestant Dissenters.

SETTING:

The time is indicated by reference to Monmouth's rebellion, and the story is centred on Moyle's Court, the home of widow Dame Alice Lisle, which is near Rochford on the River Avon.

THEME:

Judge Jeffries and 'The Bloody Assizes'.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The chief character, Dame Alice Lisle, is revealed through the narrative of her Assistant Bailiff and her actions are convincing. She shows great singleness of mind, and does not weaken when she is brought to trial, as a true noble woman. When offered a pardon if she confesses, she merely asks that she be beheaded rather than burnt, and her request is granted. Judge Jeffries is well described as the 'butcher'.

STYLE:

The style is descriptive narrative, balanced with dialogue. The rapid sequence of events creates a feeling of intensity and mystery, contrasting with her dignity in death.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The purge of Protestants in 'The Bloody Assizes' was both ruthless and heartless. The characters and setting may be fictitious, but the story is based on fact.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Since there are no child characters, empathy may be difficult, as children may not be able to fully understand the religious dilemmas of the time. They may feel sympathy for Dame Alice, that she must die for hiding persons whose only crime was religious dissent.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Death penalty for sheltering Dissenters (High Treason)
- 2) Religious persecution.

TITLE: WHAT'S THE RHYME FOR PORRINGER?

PLOT:

The story tells of William's landing at Torbay in 1688, and his subsequent coronation. The story is told by a pedlar whose humour makes an amusing antidote to the anxieties of the villagers he is trading with.

SETTING:

This is out of doors and reflects the wanderings of the pedlar who sees the events in Torbay and then describes the bewilderment among the people in a nearby village as to who is the real King.

THEME:

Events preceding the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The pedlar (narrator) is full of fun and makes songs up for everyone, working on the 'Orange' theme; William of Orange is introduced through the narrative, and his actions are credible and authentic. The minor characters help to show the confusion in peoples' minds.

STYLE:

The style is descriptive narrative with dialogue between the pedlar, bystanders at William's landing, a sailor who had helped in James II's flight, and the villagers who were celebrating the coronation. Humour is introduced in name-calling and in the exchanges with Tom King's family in their dilemma over their baby's name. A Dutch flavour is introduced in William's appeal to the 'goot' people.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

This is again a fictional situation based on an accurate historic event - the two being well balanced - the rhymes and jingles are probably original - hence the title.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

This is another story without child characters, but as 'the landing' has recently (1988) been re-enacted on television, some empathy may be possible. There could be sympathy for James, but perhaps he deserved to lose the throne. The warming pan incident certainly gives scope for imagination.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Religious differences.
- 2) Triumph of Parliament over Monarch.

TITLE: I 'SE A PO' BLIND NEGRO

PLOT:

This story is told to illustrate the precarious rights of slaves. It is a credible account of a handicapped slave turned on the streets by his master, who finds his way to the Sharps, who worked for anti-slavery. The climax comes when the judge rules in their favour.

SETTING:

The story takes place in a town in England - probably London, and although the date is not given, the preface suggests it was towards the end of the eighteenth century.

THEME:

Philanthropic activities leading to the abolition of slavery.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The story is told by the chief character, Jonathan Strong, who is half-blind. He had been brought to England by his master and due to injuries when beaten, he was no longer able to do his work, and was turned out on the streets. He makes his way to the Sharp brothers, who help to restore his health. Jonathan remains deferential and grateful. He is a convincing character. Meanwhile the Sharps continue their anti-slavery crusade.

STYLE:

This is descriptive narrative with 'Jamaica' dialect to help give authenticity to the character of Jonathan. His dialogue with the Sharps helps to accentuate the differences between the 'slave' and the English gentleman.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

The events combine fact with fiction. The Sharps (of Durham) preceded Wilberforce in their campaignings for the rights of slaves. Certainly many slaves were brought to England by their masters, and Jonathan is based on one of them.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

It is easy to imagine an underprivileged coloured person, as there is much Third World coverage on television. The children could sympathise with Jonathan who is captured and in danger of being shipped back to slavery, because he has no rights. It may, however be difficult for children to empathise with him.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Slavery.
- 2) Equal treatment for coloured people.

TITLE: A VISITOR COMES TO NEWGATE:

PLOT:

This is a gripping story of a girl who is imprisoned (and later transported) for stealing a watch. The events follow on, reaching the climax when the time comes to board ship. During the imprisonment, Mrs. Fry visits the women, and organises 'self-help' groups. Mary, who tells the story, taught the children to read.

SETTING:

This is Newgate Prison, the most famous of prisons in London at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

THEME:

Elizabeth Fry's work with women convicts in Newgate Prison.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The chief character, Mary, reveals her position through vivid descriptions of the prison conditions, and the other prisoners. Elizabeth Fry is contrasted as a strong, serene, gentle woman, fearless among the female prisoners. She gains respect through her love and concern for the women. Red Janet is one of the hardened inmates.

STYLE:

Mary narrates the story with vivid descriptions of the conditions. The dialogue between the prisoners and with Mrs. Fry, accentuate the differences between the prisoners' conditions, and the people trying to help.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

Elizabeth Fry worked for prison reform, particularly among women in Newgate. The individuals are probably fictitious, which again gives a good balance.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY

There is a great scope for the imagination of conditions in prison, and children could empathise with Mary, who for the petty crime of stealing a watch, was eventually deported. They could sympathise with the children who were in prison with their mothers, but had not themselves, committed any crimes.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) Women in prison.
- 2) Children in prison.
- 3) Punishments to fit the crime.
- 4) Transportation.

TITLE: MRS. GRIMES'S LIVESTOCK

PLOT:

The story tells of the proposals to enclose common land around a village in 1810. A meeting is called of villagers, who owned the most strips, and is addressed by the squire. The incident is credible with anticipated objections - good information but not a very exciting plot for children.

SETTING:

The meeting takes place in the hall of the parsonage, being more suitable than the squire's house.

THEME:

Objections to the enclosures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The story is told by the Squire who considers himself to be fair and reasonable. Through his self assessment he seems to be convincing and credible. The minor characters, with the exception of Hobson, were all very apprehensive about the enclosures and tried to raise objections. Giles was a hot-head and Mrs.Grimes put her point across by bringing in a dead goose, and her cow, both of whom would be dispossessed; each episode showed their strengths and weaknesses.

STYLE:

The narrative and dialogue are suited to the occasion and the different characters. The intensity and fear of the situation is emphasized by poking fun and by making accusations against the squire.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

This story is based on broad facts and could be any one of a number of incidents in any village. The information is interesting and authentic.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

It will be easy to imagine the anxiety of the villagers at the loss of grazing rights, and children could sympathise with them, especially with Mrs.Grimes whose objection is so humorous. Empathy will be difficult, but sympathy with the Squire's aim to increase food production during Napoleon's attempted blockade.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) The enclosure movement.
- 2) The plight of the rural poor.

TITLE: THE TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS

PILOT:

The story tells of the fight of the 7 agricultural labourers for fair wages. It is interesting as it is told through one of the labourers. It is a credible description of a known historic event. The climax comes in the trial and subsequent transportation.

SETTING:

In the village of Tolpuddle and at Dorchester Assizes.

THEME:

The Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers - The Tolpuddle Martyrs.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The characters are revealed through the narrative, the chief being George Loveless who exemplifies the strength and determination of men who are driven through hunger and rising prices to ask for higher wages. The parson is portrayed as a peace-maker; the judge as a ruthless servant of the crown, issuing a warning to others.

STYLE:

The story is told by one of the martyrs in a mixture of narrative and dialogue. By the solemnity of taking the oath, the trial, and the sentence, intense feelings are aroused.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

This is a true historical event, and all the local colour used is authentic. The rhymes and jingles supplement the vivid descriptions of conditions in the agricultural villages, and the feelings of despair and discontent.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

It is not easy to imagine being cold and hungry, but children can sympathise with these conditions, and the fact that the labourers were deported. Empathy would be difficult in a story without young children.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

- 1) 'Living' wages.
- 2) The punishment of deportation for making a combined request for better wages.

TITLE: THE GREAT TREK

PLOT:

This is a gripping story of the departure of the Boers from the British in South Africa. It is a tale of hope, and is told in 3 episodes from the point of view of a young boy, a woman and an older man. There is a logical sequence of happenings leading to the first climax when they reached Natal and the second climax when Piet Retief and his friends are massacred by the Zulus.

SETTING:

The story takes place in South Africa and the time is indicated by the mode of transport - the wagons which were made into laagers at night, and the crossings of rivers which were made on rafts. The description of the Zulu Village is particularly vivid.

THEME:

The trek of the Boers from Cape Colony, in search of new homes and freedom.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The characters reveal themselves through the narrative, but all refer to Piet Retief the leader, who is a charismatic figure. The boy, the woman and the old man had all been heavily involved in the Trek, in their various roles. The boy particularly, grows in confidence as the journey progresses.

STYLE:

The style is narrative with dialogue at important points in the story. There is an overall feeling of hope - seeking the promised land - which is helped by the description of the ascent of the Dragon Mountains and looking into the valleys beyond. Tension is achieved in the visit to the Zulus, when by stealth and secret movements of the warriors, many of the Boers were massacred.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

There was more than one trek, but this one, in the early nineteenth century was the biggest movement of all. People set off in big and small parties often converging for safety. The details of this story are well researched and factually true, whilst the characters give the balance of fiction.

IMAGINATION, EMPATHY, SYMPATHY:

Children today have so many visual aids to help them imagine other lands, and there would be sympathy with the Boers who had to leave their original homes. Empathy with those who feared the Zulus would be possible, especially when they had to leave their weapons behind. They were tricked by hospitality and then murdered.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES:

1) Acquisition of other peoples' lands.

My analysis of the Powers' stories leads to several conclusions regarding their worth as historical fiction, which I propose to review.

In all three volumes, the subjects chosen provided good historical stories, some being more attractive than others, in spite of the fact that the plots may have been weak. Here I would compare Olaf the Dane, with A Boy King's Working Day, and suggest that the former was more enjoyable because there was action, and the story moved. Few of the Powers' plots were original, but all were plausible and credible with a logical sequence of happenings. They all had a recognisable beginning, a middle and an end, although in some stories the climax was reached before the end, for example, A Visitor comes to Newgate, when Elizabeth Fry succeeds in her work with women prisoners, but in spite of all her efforts, they are still transported, whereas in The Great Trek there is an identifiable ending with the massacre by the Zulus.

Throughout their stories great pains have been taken to paint in the back-cloth, and where necessary there is a preface stating the exact situation in which their story is placed. In Boys and Girls time is indicated by reference to monarchs, homes, clothes, transport, famous battles and famous people. These are interwoven with the action and characters. In some cases the story transcends the setting it describes, for example, Vermuyden and the Fen-Slodgers, and They Called Me a Scold.

Most of the stories are written with a purposeful theme in mind. Some of them are purely explanatory, for example, Brother Francis Sent Us, but others, such as,

The Pilgrimage, are blatantly moralizing. The themes seem to emerge naturally from the stories, and in no instances overpowered them.

One of the strengths of the Powers' Work is their characterization. Various means were used by the authors to reveal characters, but chiefly they were introduced in a straightforward way through the narrative, or through conversations. Most of the characters are convincing and some are more appealing to young readers than others. Child characters are well structured, behaving in ways which reflect the historical background and status of the family. Usually the episodes showed how the child developed, for example, Peggy, in *Pestilence and Fire*; Anne, in *Cargo* comes to Old Virginia and Edward Osborne, in *Adventure on London Bridge*. Many of the characters are matured by their experiences. Peggy escapes the Great Plague only to see her home destroyed by the Great Fire. The fact that she saw the rebuilding of London with wider streets and better buildings made her appreciate her improved surroundings. Anne matures when she looks after the new arrival, Patience, and shows her the new way of life in the colonies, whilst Edward Osborne saves a child's life and thereby acquires a respected status, thus proving his character development.

The style of writing in all three books is very similar, with perhaps more mature language for We Were There, and We Too Were There. In all cases, the dialogue comes naturally and is suited to the characters. Often period vocabulary is used, which reinforces the authenticity. In most novels there is a good balance between narrative and

dialogue, and the dialogue is skilfully introduced to push the action forward, or, to introduce a minor character. The mood of the stories is set by the vivid and painstaking descriptions, and the expressive dialogue, and in most cases, the story is appropriate to the subject and the impressions which the Powers wished to put across.

All stories were well researched, and in Rhoda Power's two volumes a brief preface sets the historical accuracy at the beginning of each story. Contemporary events, battles, kings, and other dateable events form the framework for the stories. Where the characters are well known, for example, Queen Victoria, Lady Jane Grey, Edward VI, then these too are well portrayed. The balance between fact and fiction is marked in stories where the events are accurate, but the characters fictitious, for example, On Board the Victory, Pestilence and Fire, and The First Railway Journey. Sometimes poems, litanies, jingles, madrigals and ballads are quoted, and where there is dialogue 'period' words are used. There are no obvious anachronisms, and the authors cannot be accused of inventing material.

Although most of the stories are credible it would appear that where there were child characters, empathy would seem to be easier for child readers. I feel that the descriptions of happenings would stir the imagination of most children, and lead to a sympathetic understanding of the trials and tribulations of former times. Some stories which faithfully described events without convincing characters, would not arouse the empathy one would have hoped.

To conclude my analysis of the stories, I selected contentious issues which would give opportunities for discussion and enable the children to make judgements.

Nevertheless, the Powers' stories are good fictional narratives fulfilling most of the requirements which I outlined in Chapter 3.

In order to compare my own assessment and analysis of the Powers' stories I compiled a questionnaire "A" (Appendix C) which I issued to fifteen primary teachers in eight different schools. I asked them each to read a different story from the forty-five Powers' stories which I have analysed. These were chosen from the 'contents' list - every third story being used. I did not know the children, and the teachers were only known to me outside school. I also submitted a questionnaire for the children - 368 - which I shall analyse following this survey.

STORIES USED IN THE SURVEY:

1. The making of Domesday Book	- <u>Boys & Girls of History</u>
2. The Novice of Sempringham	- <u>Boys & Girls of History</u>
3. A boy King's Working day	- <u>Boys & Girls of History</u>
4. Salathiel Pavy, the boy actor	- <u>Boys & Girls of History</u>
5. Cargo comes to Old Virginia	- <u>Boys & Girls of History</u>
6. A visit to Stourbridge Fair	- <u>Boys & Girls of History</u>
7. Little Slaves of Industry	- <u>Boys & Girls of History</u>
8. Queen Victoria's Childhood	- <u>Boys & Girls of History</u>
9. The Pilgrimage	- <u>We Were There</u>
10. The Surrender of Calais	- <u>We Were There</u>
11. The Nine Days' Queen	- <u>We Were There</u>
12. Vermuyden and the Fen-slodgers	- <u>We Too Were There</u>
13. Dame Alice Lisle	- <u>We Too Were There</u>
14. A Visitor Comes to Newgate	- <u>We Too Were There</u>
15. The Great Trek	- <u>We Too Were There</u>

By phrasing my questions I hoped to try to assess whether these teachers thought that the stories were good historical fiction.

In spite of the fact that every one said that the children enjoyed the story, only half would read the story again. Those who would, coincided with those who thought that there was plenty of action in the story. So obviously, the first criterion is, that the teachers were looking for stories with lively action and adventure.

I was interested to see that most teachers found that the children could not predict what was going to happen. I put this down to the fact that history is often taught superficially, and by patch and line method, so that the children were mostly on 'new ground'. Also, only about half could identify the climax of the story, and in my analysis I also showed that this was not always easy to detect. However, all classes remembered the names of the main characters and what they did. Most children found the characters convincing, but only half detected character growth or development - perhaps the concept was a bit too difficult for the age-range. Depending on the actual story, some children knew the setting, but in some classes the teachers revealed that they had prepared the scene with some additional information, as the stories were out of context with anything the classes were studying at the time. All classes (and these varied from 9 to 11 years) appreciated the differences between the period of the story and the present day, thus confirming the psychologists' claim that a sense of time sequencing and chronology has begun to take shape at this developmental stage.

Whilst all teachers thought there was a good balance between fact and fiction, only about three-quarters thought that the style was appropriate to the narrative, and most thought that illustrations would enhance the children's understanding. All were confident that the stories were historically accurate (to their knowledge), and most felt that they were written in a style of language appropriate for conveying historical facts and information to the children, and as a basis for further reading.

In an attempt to detect bias, I posed the question "Did the children identify any unfairness?", and in the majority of cases several incidents were nominated. Those who did not detect bias were in the stories of the Novice of Sempringham, A Boy King's Working Day, Salathiel Pavy and Queen Victoria's Childhood, where the characters were 'detached' from their own historical settings.

On the question of empathy, about two-thirds felt that the children showed evidence of empathising with characters. My own impression when talking to the teachers themselves, was that some were vague about the meaning of empathy - a confusion of sympathy and imagination, rather than 'standing in the shoes of' the particular character at the particular point in time. Also the measurability of empathy is difficult, and therefore the judgement of the teachers may not be reliable.

In an attempt to probe the 'empathy' question further I asked about dramatisation, role-play and follow-up work, and in all cases cross curricular activities were suggested ranging from language, writing, maths, time-charts, original

source material, maps, religious instruction, C.D.T., (pillories, manganel, drawbridge, portcullis etc.), computer simulation, museum visits, art, music and drama, so that teachers were concerned that the children should be totally involved in an attempt to soak up the period, the characters and the situation, in order to enhance empathetic understanding. All felt that the teaching of history through story-telling was enjoyable. Bearing in mind that none of these teachers were specialist history teachers, I was encouraged by their enthusiasm, and I hoped that their presentation of the story would transmit their pleasure to the children.

368 children responded to questionnaire 'B' (see Appendix E) and the majority (80%) enjoyed their stories. Two stories in particular had 100% response. These were Little Slaves of Industry, and A Visitor Comes to Newgate. The least popular was A boy King's Working Day. I would suggest that the children had been made aware of social issues (child labour and women in prisons) but that in the case of the boy King, the story was too remote. Hence the disparity.

With regard to the plots, only two-thirds (66%) thought these were good, and again the Little Slaves of Industry got 100% rating, with A Visit to Stourbridge Fair, and Cargo comes to Old Virginia, being the least popular. The decision probably hinged on the fact that most children thought there was not enough action, and cited the Novice of Sempringham, and Queen Victoria's Childhood as further examples of this.

However, three-quarters (76%) said they could remember

something of the story and about 15% remembered 'a lot'. Only four children could not remember anything at all, and two of these had listened to A Visit to Stourbridge Fair. I am not sure that it would be possible not to remember anything at all in this story. Maybe they thought the story differed from the setting and the question referred only to the narrative. The majority of the children (77%) remembered the names of the characters, and again there were no surprises in the stories which had the lowest support. These were The Pilgrimage, and Vermuyden and the fen-slodgers, as these two stories centred on the situation rather than the characters. Emphasis on the pilgrims' journey and on the draining and re-flooding of the fens superceded the characters.

Only 60% of the children could identify the beginning of the story, and those they found most difficult were A boy King's Working day, the Surrender of Calais, and Dame Alice Lisle. In all of these the action came after a lengthy description of events. However the end of the story was more easily identified by 78% of the children. In several stories most of the children identified the end, for example The Nine Days Queen and Little Slaves of Industry. I was surprised that there was such a low percentage who recognised the ending in the Making of Domesday Book (the end of the moot court hearing was fairly obvious), and A Visit to Stourbridge Fair (the end of the day), but recognised the difficulties in the Novice of Sempringham and Vermuyden and the fen-slodgers. Obviously children of this age need an identifiable climax.

Regarding the setting, most children knew where their

story took place. I detected in some responses, that the teacher concerned had supplied supplementary details before reading the story, as well as reading the prefaces supplied in We Were There, and We Too Were There.

About 69% of the children felt they had learned something new. This was evenly spread over all classes with the exception of The Novice of Sempringham and A Visit to Stourbridge Fair where in classes of 26 and 23 respectively, only 7 in each felt they had learned something new. Maybe they had studied monastic life/fairs, but certainly the focussing on characters in these two situations, had not enhanced their historical knowledge.

In attempting to identify the stories as history stories, and to get some evidence of chronological understanding and time sequencing, I posed the question "When was the story set?" - 94% replied "A long time ago", 90% thought it was a history story, giving some very interesting reasons. For those who could not think of anything better, they used the previous question and said they knew it was a history story because it was a long time ago. Some recognised the dateable framework for example, particular kings, and famous people of the past, whilst others used the information that there were no longer slaves, children did not work in factories, no child chimney sweeps, punishments were different, to convince themselves that these were customs of the past. Many said that the stories were history stories because of the old names and language. Two children who had heard read The Novice of Sempringham said, "It sounds like it with the strange names", and, the "atmosphere seems longagoish". Many

merely said, "it sounded like a history story", without further substantiation. The actual vocabulary was referred to in 'The Nine Days' Queen' as "old talking", and in 'Vermuyden and the Fen-slodgers' that "they spoke old-fashioned", whilst in 'A Visitor Comes to Newgate', the story was a history story because there were "some very interesting words that you sometimes use in history". But by far the most revealing were some of the replies of the 10% who did not think they were history stories. One child thought that the Making of the Domesday Book was not a history story - it was historical fact and therefore not a story, and 'A Boy King's Working Day' had "nothing on wars".

The story of the Visit to Stourbridge Fair did not qualify "because in history we learn about cave people", whilst a thoughtful reply on 'A Visitor Comes to Newgate' was that it was not a history story because "it is not so long ago to be a history story". Yesterday's events are not history but cavemen are, in the minds of these children and a war seems to be very necessary too.

The majority of children liked the way the story was written - the least popular again were 'A Boy King's Working Day', 'A Visit to Stourbridge Fair' and 'The Burghers of Calais'. It would appear that these stories emerge as the weakest on all counts.

In an attempt to probe into authenticity and credibility in the children's minds 81% thought the story was based on true events, but only 58% thought that it could have happened, so I detected here that the childrens' differentiation between fact and fiction was not yet

secure. Some of the lowest scores (under 50%) were Vermuyden and the fen-slodgers, A Visit to Stourbridge Fair, The Pilgrimage, The Burghers of Calais and Dame Alice Lisle whilst Little Slaves of Industry, and the Nine Days' Queen drew positive responses and the children were quite certain these stories could have taken place.

The most common reasons given were, that the stories "sounded real", "sounded true", "were realistic", but several children went further and insisted that because Ben Johnson and Shakespeare (Salathiel Pavy, the Boy Actor), Daniel Defoe (A Visit to Stourbridge Fair) Lady Jane Grey (The Nine Days' Queen) and Monmouth's Rebellion (Dame Alice Lisle) were all mentioned in the various stories, then these stories must be true. In Cargo Comes to Old Virginia one child said "I know it happened because I can feel it in my mind". Little Slaves of Industry had a very positive response from the whole class with answers which included "Yes it was history, because I've read the book", and "I've read some other stories like this", and "because it was written well". In Queen Victoria's Childhood, one child was convinced that it happened "because most history stories are true"!

Bearing in mind that 40% did not think the stories could have happened, there was also a band of 'not certain's', who gave a reply to Salathiel Pavy, the boy actor, "I don't know, but it could be possible", and to The Great Trek "all the things that happened seemed true", and in The Making of the Domesday Book, "it sounds like fact - not fiction".

The last question was possibly the most revealing in

detecting the child's conceptual development and real understanding, and although I regard this survey as too small on which to base any firm conclusions, many thought provoking observations emerged supporting my case-study analyses.

The children were finally invited to draw a picture to go with the story read to them, and everyone responded. These drawings provided further insight into the childrens' appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of their respective stories.

By using pencil crayons or felt tips they recorded a degree of detail of people, places and things not possible in the responses of the questionnaire. Those pupils with less facility in written language were able to express themselves more readily by drawing. This was noticeable particularly where the children's drawings could be identified in relation to their written answers, and were invariably supplemented by a recognisable figure, setting, incident or artefact described in the story's narrative.

Thus, for *Cargo Comes to Old Virginia* a river or wharf scene was presented with black slaves and white settlers; for *A Visit to Stourbridge Fair*, a stall or booth was portrayed, with *Punch and Judy* a favourite; for *The Pilgrimage*, if nothing else, the symbolic apple was drawn as a centre-piece; for *The Surrender of Calais* the battlements of a town were shown with figures of archers and siege-machines outside; for *Vermuyden and the Fen-Slodgers* the openness of the Fens was captured by many and/or the men or child on stilts; for *Dame Alice Lisle* a beheading scene was the popular choice, though

some good 'court' scenes were offered, for A Visitor Comes to Newgate, a popular response was inside a jail or aboard a convict ship. In all of the stories the pictorial representation of the characters naturally plays a significant part - as in the villagers of Domesday Book; realistic 'slaves' of Little Slaves of Industry; the boy king of A Boy King's Working Day - pictured with his friend, Barnby; or the young Princess of Queen Victoria's childhood pictured in or around the palace and the trekkers of The Great Trek in their waggons encamped in laagers.

Primary school children do enjoy illustrating their work, and it is through these illustrations that they communicate their depth of understanding, of places and events, and in some cases, of the joy, fears, drudgery, and hopes of the characters. By using their imagination with memory 'recall', they portrayed a degree of sympathy and empathetic understanding comparable to their stage of development which often revealed more than their written responses, but certainly confirmed the fact that children love stories, and had enjoyed these in particular.

A full list of the works of Eileen and Rhoda Power can be found in Appendix B, along with an appraisal of Rhoda Power, by Naomi Mitchison.

Most other stories written in the early period vary in form and style ranging from those which are too simple, to those which are too advanced or old-fashioned for the young reader. Even books entitled, 'Stories for....' tend to be factual narrations rather than pieces of fictional work, as seen in the Reader Series, of which the following are but a few:-

Thomas Archer, The Century Historical Readers (Blackie and Son, 1891).

Enid Blyton, Kingsway Supplementary Readers: stories from World history retold by Enid Blyton (Evans Brothers Ltd., 1934).

Mayflower Historical Readers (W. & R. Chambers Ltd., 1936).

Lydia S. Elliott, The Herald Historical Readers (Frederick Warne & Co., 1952).

Pilgrim Way - A series of history readers for primary schools (Blackie and Son Ltd., 1952-55).

However, most of these readers use a chronological theme of re-telling history, most of it British at that, for example; The Royal School Series, Stories from English History Simply Told (Nelson and Sons, 1883) - a reading book for Standard III. This book is a collection of stories, not a detailed history; but it mentions most of the leading events in the history of England. The stories are written in a simple style and language, with prominence given in them to personal adventure. Illustrations are included, and it was the author's hope that they would 'tell to the eye the same story, that is told in simple words in the text'. However, only some of the stories are fictional with the majority being biographical. All the stories are written as if in points (to be learnt) and this stops the flow of reading to some degree.

Many other books written to be read as stories were biographical, and a few are listed here in order of publication:-

C. Burton, Then and Now Stories: Heroines of then and now (MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1919).

Headway Biographies, (University of London Press, 1932).

B.Martin, William the Silent, A biography for boys and girls, (Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1946).

Barker E.J., and Hammar, C.L., Queensway Junior History, (Evans Bros., Ltd., 1962).

P.Pearce (ed)., People of the Past (Oxford University Press, 1962-67).

Clarendon Biographies (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1964-70).

There are books of historical plays e.g. Little Scenes from History (University Tutorial Press), 1938 and about famous individuals such as Joan of Arc, William Caxton, Christopher Columbus, Sir Francis Drake, Queen Elizabeth I, Sir Walter Raleigh and Charles I by E.H. Carter and Phyllis Wragge - Story and Play-Away Histories (E.J.Arnold and Son Ltd., Leeds, 1946-48).

One book worth mentioning which includes a compilation of story, play and picture is B.I. Magraw's The Thrill of History (Collins, 1954).

Many books published at the time were based on classical stories which are more aptly put into the legend and myth category. One to mention is Freda Saxey's, Classical Stories (Oxford University Press, 1954).

Special history courses designed for the young reader, included some stories alongside factual information such as:-

Oxford Class Books of History, Junior Series. (Oxford University Press, 1929).

History Junior Course (ed), Catherine B. Firth (Ginn and Co., Ltd., London, 1931).

Johnston's Junior Histories, (W. and A.K. Johnston Ltd., 1938).

These tended to follow the somewhat narrow syllabus of British history.

The Powers' stories are an outstanding contribution to the Collection of Out-dated History Textbooks of the Historical Association at the School of Education, Durham University.

CHAPTER 5CONCLUSION

From the enthusiasm of the children I have surveyed, stories are very popular today, and it appears that story-telling is making a comeback in history teaching. In The Return of Story-Telling History Teaching, (Verlag Helmut Lierhaus, Dortmund, 1985) with a sub-title 'A rebirth of story-telling', Jochen Hering's ideal is not that of the history lesson in which the teacher's task mainly consists in telling nice stories and the children listening attentively. Hering would like to see story used imaginatively and creatively and his definition of story also includes readings and tales taken from authentic primary sources. Thus story-telling in its 'purest form' is a very necessary part of history teaching.

In the context of history, as a subject taught in schools, it has been frowned upon, but is now regaining some of the status that it ought to have. Story fixes its materials in a special way, an expected way, an acceptable format consisting of the structure of a beginning, a middle and an end. A part of the plot is the depiction of character and motivation, which involves highlighting one or several characters as against the whole body of participants.

These factors have been evident in the stories reviewed, and in my survey most children readily identified the main characters.

Fiction and history often share the same educational objectives, although sometimes the border-line between fiction and true facts is hard to find. Narrative story form

comes from the imagination and the past, and therefore it is important to keep the story as true as possible since children will eventually ask if what they are reading is true, as the recognition of the differences between fact and fiction become clear. However even the most historically conscientious author must use his imagination to fill in the gaps, so that the heart of the creation is the story, and not the setting.

Therefore in any history story, the characters must eat and drink, work and sleep, travel and play, and so the author must write conscientiously, avoiding anachronisms, but not submerging the story with an excessive weight of historical detail. My survey confirmed that children prefer believable characters in realistic settings. Nevertheless, the Powers, along with the new school of writers of historical fiction seem to regard the environment in which they set their characters as an integral part of the whole, and not just a backdrop to the story.

The special quality of a historical story, however, is the power to evoke an imaginative awareness of the past in the present reader, and to show the past in such a comprehensible way, that children can empathise with its personalities.

Story-telling is a powerful and unique relationship between the letter, and listener or reader. Stories do not necessarily tell you things, they tell you about things, and it is for that, that we turn to them for explanations. Story transcends the whole of human behaviour. The past contains everything, and somewhere in it may be found what the individual is looking for. It is a human impulse to

share enjoyable experiences with other people, and this is true of reading, or listening to a book, as it is of any other rewarding and satisfying activity. Through fictional literature it is possible to enrich and extend one's experience.

We all need stories; we cannot live without them, because we live in relationships, and that is what stories offer to us - an opportunity to empathise, by using our present skills and concepts in imagining other persons and situations from the past.

Piet Fontaine has placed historical fiction and storytelling firmly at the centre of the development of the child, and indeed of all humanity. The 'foreground' story of our own individual lives needs to be placed in a wide background brimful with stories - stories of people we have never met, we do not even know, we never heard of, stories of the world. Besides the stories of fundamental events of our own lives, supplied by parents, relations and friends, the framework of a 'total history' is a central need. This can and must be supplied in school.

Thus two important factors emerge from this study. The first is that the approach to the teaching of history during the twentieth century has been greatly influenced by the work of psychologists and educationalists, with an emphasis on pupil-centred learning. In other words, they were interested in how children learn, and this has affected the teaching of history through story. Secondly, from the late Victorian/Edwardian era emphasis was laid on a chronological survey of British history, and in primary education the aim was to inculcate pride and respect for British Institutions

and the British Empire, in the hearts and minds of the pupils, through stories. Here the concern was with what children learned. However the red shading on the political maps gradually decreased, and other criteria emerged which depressed the use of story-telling in history. Children were instructed into the nature or structure of historical knowledge; they were introduced to a wider range of source materials ranging from written documents, pictures, artefacts, oral evidence etc., and were given the opportunity to get to grips with historical concepts of change and continuity, cause and consequence, with occasional story-telling.

But, in his review of Stories about olden times, by Cees Van der Kooij, Fontaine states, 'After many years of a perhaps somewhat excessive insistence on pupil activity, story-telling in history teaching is slowly coming back into its own again,'⁽¹⁾ confirming that history story-telling was pushed to one side, and is only now, making a comeback.

Twenty years ago the authors of the Plowden Report lamented the fact that despite the excellence of many contemporary children's stories, teachers were not sufficiently informed about them. From my contact with a small sample of teachers unfortunately, this criticism is still valid today, in spite of their greater availability. As the children in the survey responded so positively to the Powers' stories, then the place of historical fiction and story-telling in Primary Education is central to the teaching of history.

1) Piet F.M. Fontaine, International Society for History Didactics, (Wadenswil, W. Germany, 1985), p.69.

In the most recent publication of the D.E.S. - History from 5 to 16 - Curriculum Matters 11 (1988), page 19, this is endorsed. Stories are seen as a natural way in which sequence, causation and change can be explored. For pupils of primary age, stories aid the development of language, chronology and environmental understanding, and stimulate a whole range of cross-curricular practical activities. Good stories, well told by teachers, and pupils, are crucial components of the learning process.

APPENDIX A: Taken from Charlotte S. Huck -

Children's Literature in the Elementary School,
(Holt, Rinehart & Winston, USA, 1979), pp.16-17.

Guides for evaluating children's literature:

1. PLOT:

- Does the book tell a good story? Will children enjoy it?
- Is there action? Does the story move?
- Is the plot original and fresh?
- Is it plausible and credible?
- Is there preparation for the events?
- Is there a logical series of happenings?
- Is there a basis of cause and effect in the happenings?
- Is there an identifiable climax?
- How do events build to a climax?
- Is the plot well constructed?

2. SETTING:

- Where does the story take place?
- How does the author indicate the time?
- How does the setting affect the action, characters, or theme?
- Does the story transcend the setting and have universal implications?

3. THEME:

- Does the story have a theme?
- Is the theme worth imparting to children?
- Does the theme emerge naturally from the story or is it stated too obviously?
- Does the theme overpower the story?
- Does it avoid moralizing?

4. CHARACTERIZATION:

- How does the author reveal characters?
 - Through narration?
 - In conversation?
 - By thoughts of others?
 - By thoughts of the character?
 - Through action?
- Are the characters convincing and credible?
- Do we see their strengths and their weaknesses?
- Does the author avoid stereotyping?
- Is the behaviour of the characters consistent with their ages and backgrounds?
- Is there any character development or growth?
- Has the author shown the causes of character behaviour or development?

5. STYLE:

- Is the style of writing appropriate to the subject?
- Is the style straightforward or figurative?
- Is the dialogue natural and suited to the characters?
- Does the author balance narration and dialogue?
- How did the author create a mood? Is the overall impression one of mystery, gloom, evil, joy, security?
- What symbols has the author used to intensify meaning?
- Is the point of view from which the story is told appropriate to the purpose of the book?

6. FORMAT:

- Do the illustrations enhance or extend the story?
- Are the illustrations consistent with the story?
- How is the format of the book related to the text?
- What is the quality of the paper?
- How sturdy is the binding?

My supplementary evaluation for historical fiction:..

7. HISTORICAL AWARENESS:

- Is there historical accuracy?
- Is there a balance between fact and fiction?
- Are original sources used in any way?
- Are there any apt illustrations?
- Is the language in keeping with the period in question?
- Are there any obvious anachronisms?
- Can historical empathy be reached?

APPENDIX B:RHODA DOLORES POWER

British. Born in Altrincham, Cheshire in 1890. Educated at Oxford High School for Girls, 1903-09; Girton College, Cambridge 1909-1912. Director of Children's Broadcasting, BBC Radio, London, in the 1920s. and 1930s. Died 9 March 1957.

WORKS BY RHODA POWERFICTION FOR CHILDREN:

Boys and Girls of History, with Eileen Power. (Cambridge University Press, 1926: Macmillan, New York 1927: re-issued, Dennis Dobson, 1968: Roy, New York, 1970).

More Boys and Girls of History, with Eileen Power. (Cambridge University Press, 1928: Macmillan, New York, 1928: re-issued with revised bibliography Dennis Dobson, 1977).

Ten Minute Tales and Dialogue Stories, illustrated by Gwen White, (Evans, 1943).

Here and There Stories, illustrated by Phyllis Bray, (Evans, 1945).

Redcap Runs Away, illustrated by C. Walter Hodges, (Cape, 1952: Houghton - Mifflin, Boston, 1953).

We Were There, illustrated by Charl. (Allen and Unwin, 1955).

We Too Were There : More Stories from History, illustrated by Charl. (Allen and Unwin, 1956).

From the Fury of the Norsemen and other Stories, illustrated by Pauline Baynes, (Houghton - Mifflin, Boston, 1957).

OTHEPS:

Union Jack Saints : Legends, with others, (Constable, 1920).

The Kingsway Histories for Juniors:

Book 1: From Early Days to Norman Times.

Book 2: Norman Times and the Middle Ages.

Book 3: From the Peasants' Revolt to James I.

Book 4: From James I to the Seven Years' War

illustrated by E. Hamilton Thompson (Evans, c.1924)

Cities and their Stories, with Eileen Power. An introduction to the study of European history. (A. and C. Black, 1927).

Twenty Centuries of Travel : A Simple Survey of British History, with Eileen Power. (A. and C. Black, 1927: Houghton - Mifflin, Boston, 1927).

The Age of Discovery : From Marco Polo to Henry Hudson, (Putnam, London and New York, 1927).

How It Happened : Myths and Folktales, illustrated by Agnes Miller Parker. (Cambridge University Press, 1930: Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, 1936).

Richard the Lionheart and the Third Crusade, edited by Eileen Power, (Putnam, London and New York, 1931).

Stories from Everywhere, illustrated by Nina K. Brisley. (Evans, 1931; Macmillan, New York, 1931: as The Big Book of Stories from Many Lands, (Watts, New York, 1970).

Great People of the Past, Cambridge University Press, 1932: Macmillan, New York, 1932).

Britain and the World History Series, with Eileen Power - Book III, Twenty centuries of travel, (Pitman, 1933).

PUBLICATION FOR ADULTS:

Under Cossack and Bolshevik, (Methuen, 1919: as Under the Bolshevik Reign of Terror, McBride and Nast, New York, 1919).

RHODA POWER

by

Naomi Mitchison

from Twentieth Century Children's Writers, ed. D.L.Kirkpatrick. (Macmillan, 1978) pp.1014-1015.

'In the 1930's intelligent school librarians and parents were always on the look-out for a new book by Rhoda Power. She could give young readers an interest in history which would last and take them on to serious study. Her Boys and Girls of History, written in collaboration with her sister, Eileen, the historian, were outstanding of their time. They were halfway between fiction and solid history. She told her stories of these boys and girls through minor characters mostly, unless there happened to be a very well documented child, like, for example, the young Mary Queen of Scots. On the whole they are the stories of apprentices, of children on the outskirts of some great event: the Bristol lad or the Burmese child attaching himself first to the extraordinary stranger Ralph Fitch, first Englishman to visit Burma, but deserting him for the greater honour of tending a white elephant.

By today's standards these are long stories with no talking down or easy vocabulary, but they are compulsive reading for anyone interested in the past and must have helped many a history teacher as well as her pupils. They range the world with end-paper maps showing the voyages; and they are packed with authentic details described so vividly that they are never boring....Her How it Happened, ranged the world of folklore (and has outstanding illustrations by Agnes Miller Parker), and here equally there is no talking down. She never sets herself above her child audience but expects them to be her equals. This was her strength.'

APPENDIX C:QUESTIONNAIRE 'A' : TEACHERSThe Value of Historical Fiction

Please circle the answer where necessary.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Did the children enjoy the story? | YES | NO |
| 2. Was there plenty of action in the story? | YES | NO |
| 3. Could the children predict what was going to happen at anytime? | YES | NO |
| 4. Did the children identify the climax of the story? | YES | NO |
| 5. Can the children remember the names of any of the main characters? | YES | NO |
| 6. Can the children remember the personalities or actions of any of the characters? | YES | NO |
| 7. Do the children know where the story was set (i.e. the place)? | YES | NO |
| 8. Did the children appreciate the difference between the historical period in which the story was placed, and the present day? | YES | NO |
| 9. Did the children sense any themes in the story? for example, goodness, evil, poverty, wealth etc. | YES | NO |
| 10. Did the children find the characters convincing? | YES | NO |
| 11. Did the children detect any character growth and development? | YES | NO |
| 12. On the whole, did the children accept/like the style and language of the narrative? | YES | NO |
| 13. Was there a good balance between fact and fiction? | YES | NO |
| 14. Would pictures/illustrations have enhanced the children's understanding? | YES | NO |
| 15. Do you think the story was historically accurate (as far as you know)? (Please state why). | YES | NO |
| 16. Do you think the use of language is in keeping with the period in question? | YES | NO |
| 17. Do you think the children learned anything about the history of the period described? | YES | NO |

Contd/.....

Appendix C, continued:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 18. Did the children identify any 'unfairness'?
If <u>YES</u> please state examples. | YES | NO |
| 19. Was there evidence of the children
empathising with the story? | YES | NO |
| 20. Would this story lend itself to drama-
tization/role play? | YES | NO |
| 21. What follow-up work, if any, might you
carry out? | | |
| 22. Would you read this story again? | YES | NO |

APPENDIX D:

ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' REPLIES

Class:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Positive Response
Questions 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
2	x	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	50%
3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	5%
4	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	x	✓	x	56%
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	95%
7	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	85%
8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
9	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	x	70%
10	✓	-	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	83%
11	x	-	✓	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	x	50/50
12	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓	x	70%
13	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	95%
14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	90%
15	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	95%
16	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	85%
17	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	90%
18	✓	-	x	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	70%
19	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	-	✓	66%
20	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	81%
21	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
22	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	55%

Key :

✓ = ans.Yes

x = ans.No

- = no answer

APPENDIX E:QUESTIONNAIRE 'B' : CHILDRENThe Value of Historical Fiction

Please circle the answer, where necessary.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Did you enjoy the story? | YES | NO |
| 2. Was there a good plot? | YES | NO |
| 3. Was there a lot of action? | YES | NO |
| 4. How much of the story can you remember? | | |
| (a) a lot | | |
| (b) some | | |
| (c) not much | | |
| (d) none | | |
| 5. Can you remember any of the names of the characters? | YES | NO |
| 6. Can you remember the beginning of the story? | YES | NO |
| 7. Can you remember the end of the story? | YES | NO |
| 8. Where does the story take place? | | |
| 9. Did you learn anything new? | YES | NO |
| 10. When was the story set? | | |
| (a) this year | | |
| (b) a few years ago | | |
| (c) a long time ago | | |
| 11. Do you think it was a history story? | YES | NO |
| 12. How can you tell? | | |
| 13. Did you like the way the story was written? | YES | NO |
| 14. Did you think that the story was based on true events? | YES | NO |
| 15. Did you think this story could have happened? If you answered YES on question 15, do question 16. | YES | NO |
| 16. How do you know it happened? | | |
| 17. Draw a picture to go with the story - Use a separate piece of paper. | | |

APPENDIX F:ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S REPLIES

Story	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total	Positive Response
Total children in the class	25	26	26	27	31	23	26	21	10	28	33	17	26	23	26	368	
Questions: 1	22	18	14	19	23	15	26	19	8	24	29	15	20	23	22	297	80%
2	14	14	22	15	11	9	26	13	6	26	21	14	13	21	18	243	66%
3	9	1	8	6	8	4	26	2	5	10	21	8	20	23	19	170	46%
4	20	17	22	21	25	13	19	18	10	20	26	8	23	21	18	281	76%
5	17	21	23	20	30	23	23	16	2	15	28	4	25	17	21	285	77%
6	16	13	8	16	22	15	20	14	9	9	24	5	12	16	19	218	60%
7	14	12	21	25	23	13	26	17	10	25	28	8	24	18	24	288	78%
8	21	20	20	6	3	19	26	19	10	28	30	15	25	19	26	287	78%
9	18	7	20	9	19	7	21	19	10	20	30	13	18	19	23	253	69%
10	25	25	26	27	29	21	23	19	7	27	33	16	26	16	28	346	94%
11	24	22	26	22	28	19	26	20	8	25	31	14	26	14	26	331	90%
12	19	19	23	20	29	21	24	19	9	26	33	16	24	18	26	326	89%
13	19	18	14	21	18	14	26	18	8	15	23	13	14	22	16	259	70%
14	19	15	19	22	28	12	26	20	8	24	32	9	23	19	23	299	81%
15	13	13	16	14	15	8	25	16	2	13	26	2	12	18	19	212	58%
16	13	13	14	14	15	8	25	16	2	12	27	2	12	15	19	207	58%

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